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A

Practical Discourse

CONCERNING A

Future Judgment.

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Dean of St. *Paul's*, Master of the *Temple*,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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NOSCE · TEIPSUM
Thomas Isted of the
Middle Temple Esquire

TO THE

QUEEN's

MOST

EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it pleaſe Your Majeſty,

TO accept of this Treatiſe, a ſmall Part of which being Preached in Your Royal Chappel, Your Majeſty was pleaſed to excuſe the Printing of it then, that it might wait for the Publication of the Whole, which Your Majeſty was given to underſtand I intended: which I now

humbly preſent to Your Sacred Majeſty, *rejoicing that I have ſo good an Occaſion of Acknowledging Your Great and Undeſerved Favours to me, and of profeſſing, with all the Sincerity that the Subject of this Treatiſe requires, that I am*

Your MAJESTY's
Moſt Humble and moſt Obedient
Subject and Servant,

WILLIAM SHERLOCK.

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PRACTICAL DISCOURSE
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Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

The INTRODUCTION.

HAVING in a former Treatiſe diſcours'd largely concerning Death, the next thing to be conſidered is Judgment; for ſo the Apoſtle tells us, *After death the judgment.* And a very grave and ſerious Thought it is, if ever men will be ſerious: For nothing can be of greater concernment to us than a Future 9. Heb. 27.

Judgment, which will determine our Final State and Condition to Eternity.

In treating on this Subject, I shall observe this Method:

1. Enquire what Assurance we have of a Future Judgment.

2. The Time when this Judgment shall be: God *hath appointed a day* for it.

3. Who shall be our Judge: *God will judge the world*, but not immediately by himself, but *by that man whom he hath ordain'd*; that is, by Christ Jesus, who is a Man, and the Son of Man, as well as the Eternal Son of God.

4. The Publick and Awful Solemnities of Judgment.

5. The Persons who shall be judged, *the World*, or all Mankind.

6. For what we shall be judged, *whatever we have done in this body, whether it be good or bad.*

7. The Rule whereby we shall be judged, and the Righteousness of the Judgment.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Proof of a Future Judgment.

IN treating of Death, there was no need to prove, That all men muſt die, for this is too viſible to be denied; but Judgment is not ſeen, nor can it be ſeen, becauſe it is not yet: Could men indeed look into the other world, they would ſoon be convinced, by the different ſtate of good and bad men there, that God has appointed a Day for Judgment; but that is an inviſible ſtate to us, and the thoughts of Judgment are ſo uneaſy to bad men now, that they are very unwilling to believe it; and this makes it neceſſary to lay the Foundation of all in the Proof of a Future Judgment.

Now there are two ways of proving this: Firſt, By the Principles of Reaſon. Secondly, By Revelation. By Reaſon we can prove, that God will judge the world, as that ſignifies that God will call all men to an account for their Actions, and that he will reward good men, and puniſh the wicked in the next world. This the Heathens themſelves diſcovered by the light of Nature; they talked very much of the Infernal Judges, and of the Rewards and Puniſhments of good and bad men after Death; and therefore in this ſenſe did believe a Future Judgment: But yet the Revelation of the Goſpel has given us a more plain and undeniable aſſurance of this, and has diſcovered ſomething more than the light of Nature could diſcover. The Light of Nature and Reaſon may

ſatisfy us, as it did the Heathens, that God will reward good men, and puniſh the wicked, in the next world; but it could not tell us, that God had appointed a general Day of Judgment, wherein all the Dead ſhall riſe again out of their Graves, and re-aſſume their Bodies, and be ſummoned to Judgment; it could not tell us who ſhall be our Judge, with what Glory and Majeſty he ſhall appear, and with what Pomp, and awful and terrible Solemnities he ſhall judge us. The world knew nothing of this, before the Goſpel was preached; for it depends wholly upon the will and pleaſure of God, and therefore can be known only by Revelation.

I ſhall begin with the Proofs from Reaſon, and ſhew you what moral Evidence and Aſſurance we have, that God will judge the world, as that ſignifies, that he will reward good men, and puniſh the wicked in the next world; and this Proof conſiſts of ſeveral Branches; and though each particular conſidered apart by it ſelf, may not be thought ſufficient; yet if we unite them into one, and take them in their natural order, they add ſuch light and ſtrength to each other, that I perſuade my ſelf they will convince any man of a Future Judgment, who is not obſtinately reſolved againſt this belief.

SECT. I.

That Man is by Nature an Accountable Creature.

FIrſt then, I obſerve, That the very make and frame, and condition of Human Nature proves that Man is an accountable Creature, who can

can give an account of his Actions, and therefore may be called to an account for them; and that is a ſtrong preſumption that he will be called to an account, that is, that he will be judged. There are four things neceſſary to make any Being accountable: 1. That he have a Principle of Reaſon to know what he does, and to judge for himſelf. 2. That he have a Rule to live by, to direct him what to do, and what to avoid. 3. That he have liberty of Choice, and the free government of his own Actions. 4. That he be an inferior and ſubordinate Creature, who has ſome above him to call him to an account.

I. As for the firſt, we know a Beaſt, which is governed by Inſtinct, not by Reaſon, can't be judged, becauſe ſuch brute Creatures know not what they do, and therefore can give no account what they do; which is the caſe alſo of Infants, of Fools and Mad-men, who muſt be governed, that they may do no hurt, but can't be judged: but a reaſonable Creature, as Man is, who knows what he does, and can judge of his own Actions, may be judged for them too.

II. Where there is no Rule to live by, there is nothing to be judged for; when nothing is commanded, and nothing forbid, all Actions are alike indifferent; and in this caſe there is no other Rule but for every man to pleaſe himſelf, and to do what he likes beſt; and he who does ſo, gives a good account of himſelf, and cannot be blamed for it: If there were no Rule of Good and Evil, there could be no place for Rewards and Puniſhments, and conſequently no place for Judgment: But when we have a Rule to live by, as all Man-

kind have, either the Laws of Nature, or the revealed Will of God, we may do either good or evil, and may deſerve either Rewards or Puniſhments, and then we may be judged too.

III. Whatever Being acts by Neceſſity or Fate, not by Choice, is no more capable of being judged than the Winds and Seas are, or any other natural and neceſſary Cauſes; for where there is no choice, there is neither moral good nor evil: But Man is a free Agent, who not only knows the difference between good and evil, but can chuſe the good, and refuſe the evil, and therefore he is capable of praiſe or blame, of rewards or puniſhments, for the good or evil which he does; that is, he may be called to an account, and be judged for what he does.

Eſpecially, IV. if he be an inferior, and ſubordinate Creature, who has a Superior to judge him: To judge indeed is an act of Superior Authority and Power, and therefore thoſe who have none above them, cannot be judged; but an Inferior is by the condition of his nature, or circumſtances of life, obnoxious to the Judgment of his Superiors; for the very notion of a Superior and Inferior ſignifies to govern, and to be governed; to judge, and to be judged. An Inferior is obnoxious to the Judgment of his Superior, who may judge him if he pleaſes; and this is the condition of all Mankind, if we believe that there is a God above us, who is our Natural Lord.

So that Man by his very nature and condition was made to be judged; which is a very good argument that he ſhall be judged, if we will but allow, that God will govern all Creatures according to their natures; which is eſſential to the Wiſdom

dom and Juſtice of his Government: As to take a particular review of this matter.

1. If it be naturally decent and fitting, that a reaſonable Creature ſhould give a reaſon of his Actions, why ſhould we doubt, whether the wiſe Governor of the World will require a reaſon of him, and call him to an account? Reaſon makes us capable of giving an account of our Actions, and which is more than that, it makes us ſenſible, that we ought to give an account; our own minds exact an account of us, and when we cannot give a good account to our ſelves, we bluſh alone, when no body ſees us; nay, Reaſon makes us ſo liable to give an account, that it requires no Authority to ask it, it is what we owe to all Mankind, and the meaneſt man may expect it from us, as well as our Judge; and when we cannot give a reaſonable account of our Actions, a Child or Beggar ſhall ſhame and confound us, whatever our Quality or Character be. And it would ſeem ſtrange, if Reaſon ſhould make us accountable to all the World, but only to God, who is the Sovereign Lord of all; that God ſhould make us accountable to our ſelves, and to all other reaſonable Beings, but not to himſelf.

2. If GOD have given man a Rule of Life, and a natural Meaſure of Good and Evil, can it be thought that he will require no account of him, whether he keeps or breaks theſe Laws? For to what purpoſe then did he give 'em? How contemptible are Laws without a Sanction, or a Sanction without a Judge to diſpenſe Rewards and Puniſhments? To give Laws without taking notice how they are obſerved, or puniſhing the breach

of them, is so very absurd, that no Human Government was ever wholly guilty of such Folly; and why should we charge God with such Absurdities in Government, as would be ridiculous in Men? If we will but allow God as much Wisdom and Discretion as an Earthly Prince, we may certainly conclude, That if he have given Laws to men, he will judge them by those Laws.

3. There is no way of governing a free Agent as man is, but by Hopes and Fears, by Rewards and Punishments; for Force and Violence is not the Government of a free Agent, because it destroys its liberty; so that if God govern Mankind at all, he must judge them: that is, he must Reward or Punish them according to the Good or Evil they do; and though this does not directly and immediately prove a Future Judgment, yet it is a fair step towards it, as will appear more hereafter: All that I desire to conclude from hence at present is only this, That if God govern Men like reasonable Creatures, he must judge them; and if we have as great assurance that God will judge the world, as we have that he governs it, there is an end of this Dispute, to men who believe a God and a Providence.

Nay, indeed we need only suppose that man was made by a wise Being, to prove that he shall be judged; *i. e.* that he shall be rewarded or punished for all the Good or Evil that he does in the world; for a Wise Being will take care to govern the Creatures which he makes, and to govern them in such a way as is agreeable to the Nature he has given them; and since Man, who is a free Agent, can be governed only by Hopes

and

and Fears, God would never have made man, had he not intended to judge him; that is, he would never have made ſuch a Creature as can be governed only by the hope of Rewards, and by the fear of Puniſhments, had he not reſolved to lay theſe reſtraints upon him, to Reward and Puniſh him according to his Works: How neceſſary Rewards and Puniſhments are to the Government of Mankind we ſee in Human Societies, which cannot ſubſiſt without them: notwithſtanding the ſevereſt Laws, and the ſevereſt Executions, every Age, and every Country produces great prodigies of Wickedneſs, which no doubt would be much greater and more numerous, were there no Laws and Government to reſtrain them; and when the univerſal experience of Mankind convinces the World of the neceſſity of Laws and Government, why ſhould we think that the Wiſe Maker of Man ſhould not over-awe him alſo with a ſence of his own Power and Juſtice, which is a more effectual reſtraint than the Rods and Axes of Princes?

4. Thus if man by the condition of his Nature be an inferior depending Creature, he is by Nature accountable to God, who is his Sovereign Lord; and this is a good Argument that he muſt give an account of himſelf to God: For there is no reaſon to think that God will not call Man to an accouut, when he has made him by Nature accountable to himſelf; for the nature of things is the moſt certain Rule to know how God will govern them; at leaſt the nature of things is a ſtrong preſumption, unleſs there be plain and poſitive evidence to the contrary. He who acknowledges, that man is by Nature an inferior Creature, who

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is accountable to God for all his Actions, must reasonably take it for granted, without any further proof, that God will judge him, and call him to an account; for God has declared his intentions to judge him by making him such a Creature as is to be judged: And there is no pretence and shew of Reason to say, that God will not take an account of man, whom he has by nature made an accountable Creature, unless we can produce a plain and express Revelation of God's Will, that he will not judge Mankind. No man can prove by Reason, that God will not judge Mankind, for no reason can be good against the nature of things, and the nature of things do most reasonably prove a Judgment; and therefore we ought to take it for granted, that God will judge the World, till we see a plain Revelation, that he will not.

This is worth observing, because it puts the proof upon those who deny a Judgment, where in reason it ought to lye: For those who have the reason and nature of things on their side, have as good natural evidence as they can have, and need seek no farther; but those who will believe contrary to the nature of things, ought to prove their Exemption from the Laws and Condition of their Nature.

I desire you seriously to consider this, and to lay it to heart, for it is a very sensible Argument, and if well managed, will convince you how foolish and unreasonable all your hopes are of escaping the Judgment of God, unless you have some secret Revelation of this, which the rest of Mankind know nothing of: To represent this as plainly and familiarly as I can, give me leave

leave to ask you ſome few queſtions, or rather ſeriouſly ask your ſelves ſuch queſtions as theſe:

Why do I hope that God will not judge me? Am I not obnoxious to the Judgment of God? Am I not his Creature, and is he not my Sovereign Lord? And is he not then my Judge? And why ſhould I expect that my Natural Lord and Judge will not judge me? Do not Parents judge their Children, and Maſters their Servants, and Princes their Subjects, and all Superiors their Inferiors, and can I think that God alone, who is the Sovereign Lord of all, and from whom all inferior Power and Authority is derived, ſhould not himſelf judge his Creatures? Has God renounced his Authority, or is the exerciſe of it too troubleſome to him? Has he made us accountable Creatures, but to give no account? Has he made us in Subjection to himſelf, to exerciſe no Authority over us? We had better ſay, that God has made us all Sovereign, independent, unaccountable Creatures, which is leſs abſurd than to ſay, that God is our Sovereign Lord, but will not judge us, that is, will not exerciſe his Sovereign Authority.

All this ſeems to be ſelf-evident, and to carry its own proof and conviction with it; and there is but one Evaſion that I know of, by the help of which men flatter themſelves ſtill into the Opinion, that God will not judge them, or at leaſt, that it is not evident from the Light of Nature, that he will; and that is, that all this proves indeed, that God may judge us, if he pleaſe, but not that he will: we are his Creatures, and obnoxious to his Power and Juſtice, and this proves, that he may

may judge us if he pleaſe, but he is under no force, and therefore if he pleaſe alſo he may not judge us; and while this is poſſible, Men who love their Sins, are apt to flatter themſelves that God will not judge them.

Now this is no Objection to us Chriſtians, who have a plain and expreſs Revelation of God's Will in this point, that he will judge the World, tho it is an additional ſatisfaction to ſee, that the nature and reaſon of Things do ſo well agree with Revelation; but however, at preſent I ſhall ſet aſide Revelation, and conſider whether what I have now diſcourſed, do not as well prove, that God *will*, as that he *may* judge the World.

Now to prove this, I will only ſuppoſe one Principle, which I will thank no man to grant me; That what the reaſon and nature of things proves ought to be done, that God will do; for though God is under no force and neceſſity, yet his own Nature is a Rule and Law to him; what ought to be done, every wiſe and good and juſt Being will do, and therefore God will certainly do it, who is infinite Wiſdom; and what the nature of Things require to be done, that is the preſcription of his own Wiſdom, for he made all things, and therefore by giving ſuch natures to his Creatures, he has made a Law for himſelf, and ſufficiently declared what he intends to do. Now let any man conſider what I have already diſcourſed, and tell me, whether a reaſonable Creature, who is a free Agent, and under the Power and Authority of a Superior, who preſcribes him the Laws and Rules of Action, ought not to be called to an account for his Actions; whether a wiſe Father, or a wiſe Prince, would not

not do this; and whether it be not a great neglect and fault in the Superior, if it be not done? I'm ſure all Mankind would think ſo; and then we muſt grant, that the ſtate and condition of Human Nature proves, that God not only may, but will judge the World; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that he will be guilty of ſuch a neglect, as would be thought a great fault among men.

There are ſome things indeed, which we cannot know, that God will do, without a Revelation; ſuch free and arbitrary acts of Goodneſs, as he had no way obliged himſelf to, nor had given any natural notice of; ſuch as is the whole Oeconomy of Man's Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt: but what either his own nature, or the nature of Things, which he has made, exacts from him, that we may be ſure a wiſe and juſt and good Being will do.

For though God is under no force and conſtraint, yet he muſt, becauſe he will, act agreeably to his own Nature, and to the nature of Things; and we may as well ſay, that we are not ſure, that God will do what is Good, and Juſt, and Wiſe, becauſe he is under no force to do it; as that he will not judge Mankind: For to judge the World is as eſſential to the Sovereignty of God, as to do what is wiſe and good is to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs: And it is as abſurd to ſay, that God is the Sovereign Lord of the World, but need not exerciſe his Sovereign Authority in governing or judging Mankind, as to ſay, that God is infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, but need never do what is wiſe or good: Such dormant and unactive Perfections are a contradiction to the very notion of a God, whoſe Nature is a pure and ſimple Act,

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all Life and Energy; if he be good, he will do good; and if he be the Sovereign Lord and Judge of the World, he will Govern and Judge Mankind.

This is the first natural Evidence of a Future Judgment, taken from the Frame and Condition of Human Nature, which I have insisted on much longer than I intended, for the more I think of it, the more plain and convincing it seems to be; for what imaginable reason is there to question, whether God will judge Mankind, when he has made man just such a Creature, as he must have made him, if he had intended to judge him; endowed him with Reason and Understanding, and liberty of Choice, given him Laws and Rules of Action, and made him in subjection to Himself, obnoxious to his own Power and Justice; which are plain natural Indications, that God does intend to call him to an account?

SECT. II.

The essential Differences between Good and Evil, and the Natural Notions we have of GOD, prove a Future Judgment.

II. THE essential Differences between Good and Evil, prove that Mankind ought to be judged; and this is somewhat more than that God has made Man such a Creature as is by nature accountable, and may be judged: Just as much more as the difference is between *may* be and *must* be; for though, as I observed before, this *may be* does very strongly infer *a will be*; that is, that God having made man an accountable Crea-

Creature, is a reaſonable Preſumption, that he will judge him, and call him to an account; yet this is not ſo direct and immediate a Proof that God will judge Mankind, as it is to ſhew, that the eſſential difference of Good and Evil makes it neceſſary, that Man ſhould be judged, that he ſhould be rewarded and puniſhed according to his works.

I premiſe this to ſhew you, what a new advance this makes towards the proof of a future Judgment, and now come to explain the force of this Argument:

That there is an eſſential difference between Good and Evil, (as unwilling as ſome Men are to own it) is demonſtrable to every Man's ſenſe and experience, which is a more undeniable Proof, than ſome nice and Metaphyſical Speculations; and that what is good ought to be rewarded, and what is evil ought to be puniſhed, is acknowledged by the univerſal conſent and practice of Mankind; and I think the neceſſary and unavoidable conſequence of this is, that good Men ſhall be rewarded, and the wicked puniſhed; that is, that Mankind ſhall be judged according to their Works. This is in ſhort the Argument; and if I can make good each part of it, I have no more to do, but to leave it to your ſerious conſideration.

I. That there is an eſſential difference between Good and Evil; that is, that there are ſome things in their own natures very good for men, and other things which are very hurtful to them: And will any Man deny this? This is the Good and Evil, which is in the Nature of Things, and ſo immutably there, that all the Art and Power of

of the World, can never alter them without altering the nature of things; cannot make that good which is hurtful, nor that hurtful which is good; which is all the Good and Evil which I know of: for whereas we diſtinguiſh between Moral and Natural Good and Evil, the only difference between them is this, that Moral Good and Evil is in the Will and Choice, Natural Good and Evil is in the Nature of Things; that which is good or hurtful to our ſelves or others, is naturally good or evil; to love, to chuſe, to do that which is good or hurtful to our ſelves or others, is morally good or evil, or is the good or evil of our Choice and Actions.

If you will but recollect your ſelves, you will all find, that you have no other Notion of Good or Evil but this. When you ſay, ſuch a Man has done a very good or a very evil action, what do you mean by it? Do you not mean, that he has done ſomething very good or very hurtful to himſelf or others? When you hear that any man has done good or evil, is not the next queſtion, What good, or what hurt has he done? And do you not by this mean Natural Good or Evil? Which is a plain evidence, that you judge of the Moral Good or Evil of Actions by the Natural Good or Evil which they do: And the eſſential difference between Moral good and evil, is founded on the eſſential difference between Natural good and evil; and therefore is as unalterable as the nature of things.

This is evident from that univerſal Rule of Juſtice and Goodneſs, *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do you that alſo unto them*, which is an Appeal to our own ſenſe and feeling for the good

good and evil of our Actions; which muſt therefore ſignify the natural good and evil of them: We feel what is for our good or hurt; and we deſire men ſhould do good to us, but that they ſhould not hurt us; and therefore we muſt do good and no injury to them; and this is the ſum of the Law and the Prophets: The univerſal Rule of moral Juſtice and Goodneſs, which is to do that which is for the natural good of mankind, whatever our ſenſe and experience tells us, is naturally good and beneficial to our ſelves: which would be a very imperfect Rule, if there were not an inſeparable connexion between Moral and Natural Good.

The not obſerving this, is the true reaſon why ſome men can form no Notion at all of moral Good or Evil, but think Virtue and Vice to be mere Arbitrary Notions, which have no Foundation in the Nature of Things; as indeed they can have none but only this, that Virtue is to love, and chuſe, and do that which has a natural good in it, which is good to our ſelves or others; that Vice is to love, and chuſe, and do that which has ſome natural Evil in it, or which is hurtful to our ſelves or others: As for inſtance; Charity which is one of the moſt excellent Virtues of the Chriſtian Life, conſiſts in doing every thing which is for the good of men; in feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, relieving the Injured and Oppreſſed, the Fatherleſs and the Widow, in directing, adviſing, aſſiſting, comforting men in Difficulties and Diſtreſs, in forgiving Injuries, concealing Faults, judging charitably, and in all ſuch other acts of Goodneſs as are greatly for the benefit of Mankind; whereas the contrary

Vice does all the contrary Evils and Miſchiefs, to the great hurt and injury of men; and whoever conſiders this, muſt confeſs that moral Good and Evil is as real a thing as natural Good and Evil is; and I ſuppoſe no man who has his ſenſes about him, will deny that there is ſuch a thing as natural Good and Evil; as for inſtance, Pain and Pleaſure; and then his ſame ſenſes will in abundance of inſtances tell him the eſſential difference between moral Good and Evil.

On the other hand, the true and only reaſon why men ſo vaſtly differ in their Notions of moral Good and Evil, is becauſe in many inſtances they are not agreed what natural Good and Evil is: Some men call nothing Good or Evil, but what is Good or Evil to their Bodies, ſuch as Pain and Pleaſure, and the Cauſes and Inſtruments of them, Health and Sickneſs, Riches and Poverty, and the like. Others think, and with much greater reaſon, that we ſhould take our Souls into the account too; that whatever is for the eaſe and pleaſure of our minds, whatever adorns and perfects a reaſonable Nature, is a natural Good to men; as Wiſdom and Knowledge, and regular and well-govern'd Appetites and Paſſions do; and therefore theſe are the foundation of moral Virtues too; but whatever debaſes our Natures, and is a reproach to the Reaſon and Underſtanding of a man, whatever thruſts him down into the rank of brute Creatures, and either diſturbs his eaſe, or changes the Pleaſures of a Man for thoſe of a Beaſt, are great natural Evils too, if the perfection and happineſs of Humane Nature be a natural Good; and therefore to chuſe and to act ſuch things, is morally Evil.

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This is enough to ſhew what moral Good and Evil is; that it has a neceſſary relation to natural Good and Evil; and it were eaſy here to prove, were it not too long a Digreſſion, That all the Laws of the Goſpel do either command what is for the good and happineſs of Mankind, of every private man, and of publick Communities; or forbid ſuch things as are hurtful and prejudicial to them; but my preſent deſign will not ſuffer me to ſtraggle ſo far out of the way.

II. The ſecond branch of this Argument is, That according to the general ſenſe of mankind, what is good ought to be rewarded, and what is wicked ought to be puniſhed.

For the proof of this, I ſhall appeal in the firſt place to all civilized Nations who live under Laws and Government; for there is no ſuch Nation but thinks fit to reſtrain Wickedneſs by a publick Vengeance on thoſe who commit it: Indeed their Laws and Puniſhments are not always the ſame, nor do they all puniſh the ſame Crimes, nor with the ſame Puniſhments; but all of them puniſh ſuch Crimes as they think injurious to the Publick, which is the principal concernment of Civil Government; and inflict ſuch penalties on them, as they judge proportioned to ſuch Crimes, or ſufficient to reſtrain the commiſſion of them; ſome Capital, ſome Pecuniary Mulcts, Confiſcation of Goods, loſs of Honour, Corporal Puniſhments, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, or ſome publick Marks of perpetual Infamy; which is a certain Argument, that the Wiſdom of all Nations thinks it fit that Wickedneſs ſhould be puniſhed; that thoſe who do Evil ſhould ſuffer Evil; and indeed

all Mankind is so sensible of this, that there is not a greater Reproach to any Government, than the Impunity of Vice; nor a greater Glory to it, than the strict and equal Administration of Justice.

Where publick Justice falls, as it does in a great many instances, we must next appeal to private Revenge, to understand what the sense of mankind is about the desert of Sin; for there is not a more natural, nor more eager Passion in Human Nature; all men naturally desire to return the Injury they suffer, upon the Heads of those who do it; and account it no Injury, but a great act of Justice to do so. In many Nations some private Injuries have been left to private Revenge; and the *Jewish* Law it self permitted a Retaliation of Injuries, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, tho it did not permit the injured Person to take this Revenge himself, but made the publick Magistrate the Judge of it.

It may be you will wonder I should appeal to the impatient thirst and appetite of Revenge, to prove the sense of mankind, that Sin ought to be punished; when private Revenge it self is a great Evil, and forbid by the Gospel of our Saviour: but for all that, Revenge is a natural Passion, and speaks the furious rage and language of Nature, that Sin ought to be punished. It is that passion in us which ministers to Punitive Justice, as a natural tenderness and compassion does to Charity; and therefore the Passion it self is not sinful, tho the irregular exercise of it is: It is implanted in all Mankind, as the love of Justice is, but all men must not execute Revenge, no more than every man can administer Justice; where every man is a

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Miniſter of Juſtice, he may execute his Revenge too; that is, where there are no publick Laws and Government; but when we are incorporated into Civil Societies, private Revenge is ſuperſeded by publick Juſtice, and to revenge our ſelves is an Offence againſt the State; but this publick Juſtice is executing Revenge ſtill, tho without that partiality and paſſion which men betray in their own Cauſe; and tho our Saviour forbids private Revenge, it is not becauſe Sin does not deſerve to be puniſhed, but to teach us thoſe great Chriſtian Virtues of Patience and Forgiveneſs, and loving Enemies; leaving Vengeance to God, who is the juſt Judge of the world, *For vengeance is mine, I will repay it*, ſaith the Lord; which ſuppoſes that Vengeance is due to Sin, tho Chriſt requires his Diſciples to leave it to publick Magiſtrates, or to God who is the Judge of the world.

As for thoſe Sins which are not ſo properly the Objects either of publick or private Revenge, as doing no direct and immediate Injury to any but thoſe who commit them, ſuch as Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Prodigality, Sloth, Idleneſs, a vagrant, uſeleſs, fantaſtical Life, and the like; beſides ſome gentle Reſtraints which publick Laws lay on them, they have this puniſhment, that they make men contemptible and infamous, neglected and diſregarded, as a reproach to human Nature, and uſeleſs Members of the Commonwealth; and ſuch publick Infamy is a very great puniſhment, for it is one of the worſt Ingredients in all publick Puniſhments.

This, I think, ſhews what the ſenſe of mankind is about the deſert of Sin, that Puniſhment is its

just due; and they have given very ample Testimonies also to the merits of Virtue; for tho there are no Laws to reward a private Virtue, as there are to punish Vice, yet publick Honours, by the consent of Mankind, are thought the just Rewards of an eminent Virtue: This has procured the favour of the People, and advanced such deserving men to the highest Places of Trust and Dignity in the Commonwealth; When such men are advanced, it is with a publick Applause, as due to them; no man envies their greatness, or grudges to come behind them: Whereas publick Honours are thought misplaced on bad men, and set so ill-favouredly on them, as exposes them to publick Scorn and Envy. Let us then sum up this argument, and consider the just Consequences of it: There is an essential difference between Virtue and Vice; and according to the sense of all mankind, Virtue deserves to be rewarded, and Wickedness punished; and can we think then, that if God governs the World, he will not judge Mankind, that he will not reward the Good, and punish the Wicked? Has he implanted a natural Principle of Revenge and Justice in men, and taught them to erect publick Courts of Justice for the punishment of Vice, and will he not punish it himself? Has he given such a natural grace and beauty to Virtue, as attracts to it self the love, the praise, the admiration, the rewards of men, and will he himself have no regard for it? Has he made Vice infamous and contemptible, and will he cast no shame, no reproach on it? Would not the very Order of Nature complain of this, should the God of Nature have no regard to it.

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For we must observe, that according to the general sense of mankind, Virtue and Vice deserve to be rewarded and punished, not only by Men, but by God too: This is the foundation of that terrible Objection against Providence, that good men are many times great Sufferers in this world, and the wicked very prosperous; which supposes, that if God govern the world, he must punish bad men, and reward the good, because the nature of things require it, and he cannot be a just Governor if he do not: And either men ought never more to make this Objection against Providence, or they must allow, that if there be a God, he will judge the world. And indeed there is much more reason to expect this from God, than from Men; especially since the Administration of Justice among men is so corrupt, imperfect, or defective, that neither Virtue nor Vice will ever have their just Rewards, unless he take it into his own hands. And this brings me to a third branch of this Argument for a future Judgment.

III. That the natural Notions we have of God, prove that he will judge the world. All men who believe a God, acknowledge him to be the Sovereign Lord of all the world, infinitely Wise, Holy, Good and Just; now it seems impossible to me, [tho we had no Revelation of his Will what he would do] that such a Being as this should not judge the world. As to consider this matter particularly, but very briefly.

1. If he be the Sovereign Lord of the world, then he has Power and Authority to judge; nay, there is no other Being has Power and Authority

to judge the world but himself; that if he will not judge the world, the world can never be judged. And yet, as I have already proved, the essential differences of Good and Evil necessarily require that Man should be judged, that good men should be rewarded, and the wicked punished; and if there must be a Judgment, then God who is the Sovereign Lord, and the only Judge of the world, must judge mankind: If Judgment be necessary, as the nature of things prove, and as the general consent and unbiass'd reason of mankind agree it is, if we cannot hence conclude that God will judge the world, I am sure we can never know any thing certainly of God by Reason; for there is nothing which Reason concludes more expresly and positively than this.

2. As for the other Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature, such as Wisdom, Holiness, Goodness, Justice, if God be the Sovereign Lord of the world, we must consider them as the Attributes of a Sovereign; it is the Wisdom, the Holiness, the Goodness, the Justice of a Sovereign Lord: And therefore the proper exercise of these Attributes in God, consists in the exercise of a Sovereign Authority and Power; that is, in governing and judging mankind wisely, holily, with Goodness and Justice: And this certainly proves, that God as Sovereign Lord does govern and judge the world; for he cannot exercise his Wisdom, or Holiness, or Goodness, or Justice, as Sovereign, if he exercise no acts of Sovereignty: He cannot judge wisely, holily, or righteously, if he do not judge at all; and therefore though he be wise, and holy, and just, and good, yet he is not a wise, and holy, and just, and good Sovereign,

reign, for as Sovereign he exerciſes none of theſe Attributes, if he does not judge the world, if he do not reward good men, nor puniſh the wicked; which the Wiſdom, the Holineſs, the Goodneſs of a Sovereign requires. And therefore if the Natural Notion all Mankind have of God, joins *his Sovereignty* with his other Attributes, as it muſt do, unleſs we can divide God from himſelf; that he is not only a wiſe, and holy, and juſt, and good Being, but that he is a wiſe, and holy, and juſt and good *Sovereign Lord of the World*, we muſt confeſs that God does govern the world, and diſplay all theſe Attributes and Perfections in the government of it. I might add a great deal more upon this Argument, but this is ſo very plain and demonſtrative, that there is no need of it.

SECT. III.

The External Appearances of Providence prove a Future Judgment.

III. AS the Natural Notions we have of God proves that he will judge the world, ſo the external Appearances of Providence prove that God does judge the world at preſent, and that he will judge it hereafter: For the Providence of God does very often make ſuch a remarkable difference between good and bad men in this world, as is ſufficient to ſatisfy us that God does govern and judge mankind at preſent; and yet the preſent adminiſtrations of Providence do not always make a ſufficient diſtinction between good and bad men in this world, good men being very often afflicted, and bad men proſperous; which gives us a reaſonable expectation of a more juſt and righteous Tri-

Tribunal in the world to come, where Rewards and Puniſhments ſhall be more equally diſpenſed.

But to diſcourſe this more particularly; I obſerve, that the external Appearances of Providence prove that God does govern and judge the world at preſent, as much as is neceſſary to the ends of Government in this world: I confeſs, did it appear that God took no care of the Government of the world at preſent, I ſhould very much queſtion whether he would judge the world hereafter; but when there are plain and evident proofs that a wiſe and juſt Providence does govern the world; that God makes ſuch a difference at preſent between good and bad men, as the good Government of this world requires; this is a ſufficient reaſon to expect a more exact, impartial, univerſal Judgment of good and bad men in the next world. To ſtate this matter plainly, and to make a very ſenſible Argument of it, I ſhall 1. Shew you what evidence we have of a Divine Juſtice and Providence which governs the world at preſent. 2. The Force of this Conſequence, from the Providence of God in this world, to a Judgment in the next.

1. What evidence we have of a Divine Juſtice and Providence which governs the world; and I ſhall begin:

1. With that Divine Juſtice which is interwoven in the nature of things: For if God have ſo contrived the nature of things, that wickedneſs is a puniſhment to it ſelf, and wicked men a Plague and Scourge to each other, it is a plain demonſtration, that when God made man, he intended to govern him too, ſince he has annexed ſuch natural Rewards or Puniſhments to a virtu-

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ous or vicious Life: I am ſure this is as good an Argument for a Providence, as the wiſe Contrivance of Things is for God's making the world. We think it very abſurd to ſay, that the World was made by Chance, or without a wiſe Creator, when there is ſuch admirable Art and Curioſity in the Make of the meaneſt Creature, as the wiſeſt Philoſophers are not able to underſtand, much leſs to imitate: And if all Human Art and Philoſophy cannot make a Fly, nor ſo much as underſtand the Make of it, how can we poſſibly imagine, that ſuch a world as this, which conſiſts of ſuch infinite variety of Creatures, and every Creature made up of ſo many Natural Wonders, and all ſo admirably fitted to each other, as to make up an uniform, regular, and beautiful world, ſhould own any other Author, but an Infinitely Wiſe and Perfect Being, who has all Power, and all poſſible Ideas of Uſefulneſs and Beauty? That is to ſay, Since there are ſuch apparent Characters and Impreſſions of an excellent and unſearchable wiſdom in the Frame of the world, a wiſe Being muſt be the Maker of it: And is it not as good an Argument, That if Human Nature be ſo contrived, that Man, who is a Free Agent, ſhall be happy or miſerable, as he is good or bad, that God made him to be governed, and therefore intended to govern him; nay, did more than intend it, for he contrived his Nature ſo, as to govern it ſelf: for tho he has made him a free Agent, yet he has left nothing at his liberty, but whether he will be happy or miſerable; the one he muſt be, and he may indeed chuſe which he will; but there could not be a greater natural Reſtraint upon a free Agent, than to make Happineſs or Miſery the reward

ward of his Choice; eſpecially ſince Nature teaches all mankind to love themſelves, and to be happy if they can.

That this is ſo, is ſo evident to our very ſenſes, that it is a good Subject to declaim on, but needs no proof: What is there that can make any man miſerable in this world, which is not the natural and neceſſary effect of ſome Sin or other?

Will irregular and furious Paſſions make a man miſerable? a confounding ſhame, diſtracting and terrifying Fears, raging Anger, Malice, Revenge, great Perplexity, Solicitude, Anxiety of thoughts? if the pain and torment of mind is miſery, theſe Paſſions muſt make men miſerable: Now all theſe are the paſſions of a ſinful mind, Sin is the Parent and the Nurſe of them: A virtuous man, who always takes care to do his Duty, and what becomes him, knows not what ſhame means; if he be ſlander'd, reproach'd, and vilified, he may bluſh a little to be thought a bad man, but his own Conſcience does not reproach him: Nothing is truly infamous, but what is wicked; and therefore Shame can never diſturb an innocent and virtuous mind. Good men may be afraid of ſome Temporal Evils and Calamities, but it is Sin which diſtracts men with guilty Fears, which are ſo unſupportable to Human Nature. Nay, when our worldly Fears are exceſſive and tormenting, they are raiſed and aggravated by ſome Vice or other, either by too great a paſſion and fondneſs for this world, or a diſtruſt of the Divine Providence and Protection; which is the true Cauſe alſo of that Thoughtfulneſs, Anxiety, and Solicitude, which the love of Riches, and the fear of loſing ſuch uncertain Treaſures create. A

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raging Anger, Malice, Revenge, is owing to Self-love, Pride, Covetouſneſs, Injuſtice, and ſuch other Vices, as make men injurious to each other, and impatient of Injuries. Man had been a Stranger to all theſe troubleſome tormenting Paſſions, had he continued Innocent: And whoever would enjoy Peace, and Contentment, and Satisfaction of Mind, quiet, and eaſy, and chearful Paſſions, muſt root out thoſe Vices which make ſuch a Ferment, and raiſe ſuch unnatural Tempeſts in our Breaſts.

Is Pain and Sickneſs, Poverty and Diſgrace, an Untimely or Infamous Death, a great puniſhment to men? Theſe would be the puniſhments of ſome kinds and degrees of Sin, though neither God nor men ſhould judge Sinners. Drunkenneſs, and Gluttony, and Luſt, will deſtroy our Health, and afflict us with tormenting Diſeaſes, and ſhorten our Lives, and waſte our Eſtates, and make us infamous: If you want a proof of this, go viſit the Hoſpitals and the Goals; ſee the miſerable Spectacles of Rottenneſs and Poverty there, and enquire into the Cauſes of them, and how many Martyrs and Confeſſors there are to Intemperance and Luſt, or ſome other deſtructive Vice: Enquire into the Decays of Noble and Flouriſhing Families; how goodly Lordſhips and Mannors come ſo often to change their Maſters; what makes Riches ſuch uncertain and mutable things: Look into the Streets, and ſee what Crowds of miſerable and diſtreſſed People, Sloth and Idleneſs, and other Vices, have ſent thither. What loud Clamours ſhould we have againſt the Juſtice of the Divine Providence, did men ſuffer half ſo much by Piety and Virtue, as they do in the ſervice of their Luſts?

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If mens own Vices be not a ſufficient puniſhment to them, we may conſider in the next place, how bad men puniſh one another. There are infinite inſtances of this even in well-governed Kingdoms, where the Vices of men are reſtrained by publick Laws, and the ſevereſt Executions of Juſtice; yet how many Outrages do they commit, Rapes, Murders, Thefts, Oppreſſion, Injuſtice, and all ſorts of Violence! What work does Pride, and Covetouſneſs, and Luſt make! eſpecially when ſuch Vices as theſe infect great men, and are armed with Power to do Miſchief; witneſs all the bloody Wars of Aſpiring and Ambitious Princes, attended with the Ruins and Deſolations of flouriſhing Countries, and all the Miſeries and Calamities which the moſt frightful Fancy can conceive, or the moſt Poetick Wit deſcribe.

But then on the other hand, Virtue has its natural Rewards; it gives peace and ſatisfaction to the Mind, governs our Appetites and Paſſions, that they cauſe no pain or diſturbance to us; it is the beſt means to preſerve our Health, to increaſe our Fortune, to procure Friends, to reconcile Enemies, to give us Credit and Reputation, to eſcape the Injuries of bad men, to paſs through the world with as little envy, and oppoſition, and juſtling, as it is poſſible; that is, it is not of it ſelf ſufficient to make a good man compleatly happy in this world, for there is no ſuch thing to be had here; but it is the only thing that can make him as happy as he can be here; it will prevent a great many miſchiefs which other men fall into, and enable him to bear thoſe patiently, which it cannot prevent.

This is the firſt ſtep of God's governing Mankind,

kind, that natural Proviſion he has made for the puniſhment of Wickedneſs, and the rewards of Virtue; for I ſuppoſe all men will grant, that this is God's own act; for none but He who made man, could ſo fit and temper his Nature to the Laws of Virtue, as to make his Duty his natural Reward and Happineſs, and his Sin his Puniſhment. This is admirable and ſtupendious Wiſdom, and the moſt effectual means for the good government of the world, and which was neceſſary to make all other acts of Government ſucceſsful; but this is ſo uſeful an Argument, that I cannot diſmiſs it without ſome farther Remarks and Obſervations.

1. God has by this means taken care, that Virtue ſhall never be wholly unrewarded, nor Sin unpuniſhed, for they are a reward and puniſhment to themſelves: And ſuch rewards and puniſhments as are founded in the Nature of things, are unavoidable.

2. This in ordinary caſes ſuperſedes the neceſſity of God's interpoſing by an immediate Providence to reward good men and to puniſh the wicked. Theſe natural rewards and puniſhments, when there is no occaſion for more ſignal examples of God's Goodneſs and Juſtice, will ſerve for this world. For this reaſon indeed ſome men conclude, that God takes no notice of Human Affairs, becauſe he does not always viſibly interpoſe for the puniſhment of Wickedneſs, and the defence and protection of virtuous men: But God has made a ſtanding proviſion for this in the Nature of Things, and that will ſerve the ordinary ends of Providence; and when he ſees occaſion for it, he can ſoon rectify any great Diſorders by a more immediate

mediate hand; which is most agreeable to the Wisdom and to the Majesty of Providence: Thus God governs the Inanimate World, the Heavens, and the Earth, and all the Creatures in it, by keeping this great Machine in that regular and uniform motion which he at first gave it, and suffering all Creatures to follow the tendency of their own natures, excepting such cases as require some extraordinary and preternatural events; as when God thinks fit to work Miracles for the Conviction of Infidels, and to give Authority to his Prophets, or to punish a wicked world with Drought, or Famine, or Pestilence, to infect their Air, and to make the Earth Iron, and the Heavens Brass; the less the Divine Providence deviates from the Nature of Things, while the world is well and wisely governed, the more admirable is his Wisdom, who has so contrived the world, that he can govern all Creatures by the Springs and Principles of their own Natures.

3. Thus these Natural Rewards and Punishments give a sacred and venerable Authority to the Divine Laws; for this proves, that they are not Arbitrary Constitutions, which depend wholly upon the Will and Pleasure of God, who might if he had pleased have made Virtue Vice, and Vice Virtue, as some men venture to talk, with equal Ignorance, Impudence, and Profaneness; for unless God had made us other Creatures than we now are, he could have given us no other Laws, unless he could have given us Laws destructive to our Nature and Happiness; for none but a Virtuous man can be happy, and Sin must make us miserable.

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4. Nay, these natural rewards and punishments are a glorious Justification of all the other acts of God's Providence, for the rewarding good men, and punishing the wicked; for this is to dispense rewards and punishments according to the nature and deserts of things, which becomes the just Governor of the world; for Happiness is the natural effect and reward of Virtue, and Wickedness of Vice; and therefore to reward good men, and to punish the wicked, is to reward men for making themselves happy, and to punish them for making themselves miserable; to encourage them to make themselves as good and happy as possibly they can, by rewarding them with new additions of Happiness; and to restrain and terrify them from making themselves wicked and miserable, by threatning and inflicting more severe punishments on them: And can there possibly be a more gracious Government than this! What hath any man to quarrel at in it, unless it be, that God is so greatly and passionately concerned that we should be happy? For this is the apparent intention and design of his Providence in this world, both in rewarding good men, and punishing the wicked.

5. Nay further, these natural Rewards and Punishments which God has interwoven in the nature of things, whereby he has made Virtue a reward, and Wickedness a punishment to it self, are not only a particular instance of God's Providence, in that natural provision he has made for the rewards of Virtue, and the punishment of Vice, but are a natural Earnest and Pledge of all other acts of Providence, which are necessary to this end.

When God made Virtue and Vice the natural Causes and Instruments of our happiness and misery, it is certain that he intended that good men should be happy, and the wicked miserable: Now does God ever intend things by halves? Will he not certainly effect what he intends? These natural Rewards and Punishments are one good way to do this; but suppose this fail in some instances, or cannot perfectly accomplish what God intended; Will he give over here, and use no other more effectual Methods to supply those Defects? Notwithstanding all these natural Rewards of Virtue, good men while they live intermixed with the wicked, may be oppressed by them, and made as miserable as all external Calamities and Sufferings can make them, and are in great danger of being so, unless a watchful Providence secure them: The practice and exercise of Virtue will make men happy both in Soul and Body, where the natural effects of Virtue are not hindred and interrupted by external Violence; but where they are, a good man, though he cannot be called miserable, yet may be far enough from being happy; nay, would truly be miserable notwithstanding his Virtue, had he not the assurance of the Divine Protection at present, and of glorious Rewards hereafter, which support his Spirit, and make him happy in the most afflicted Fortune. The good Government of our appetites and passions will make our minds chearful and easy; contentment will sweeten a low Fortune, and Patience will make our Sufferings light; but these would be impracticable Virtues, without a firm Trust in God, and the expectation of future Rewards; for to be greatly oppressed

preſſed with preſent Sufferings, without the Support of greater Hopes, will break the moſt virtuous mind, and make it ſink and faint: Sobriety and Temperance is the beſt method to preſerve our Health, and prolong our Lives; but yet good men may have very weak and diſtempered Bodies, and may inherit the Diſeaſes of their Parents, tho not their Vices; or what care ſoever they take to preſerve their Lives, yet they may be raviſhed from them: Frugality, and Diligence, and Charity, and ſuch thriving Virtues, may raiſe an Eſtate; and Oppreſſion and Injuſtice may take it away; and how glorious ſoever Virtue be in it ſelf, it may be eclipſed and darkned by Envy and Calumny, or reproached by a prevailing Faction of Triumphant Sinners; and thus Virtue may be deprived of all its natural Rewards, if God does not interpoſe by his Providence for its defence, or reſerve ſome more certain Rewards for it in the world to come. Thus ſin in its own nature is very deſtructive, as you have heard, to the peace and pleaſure of the Mind, to the Health of the Body, to our Eſtates, and Fortunes, and Reputation in the world; but yet ſome ſinners may feel very little of this; a great and laſting Proſperity will ſo qualify the natural Malignity of Sin, as to make ſuch men very unſenſible of it; Pride, and Ambition, and Covetouſneſs have little trouble, but great pleaſure in them, when they are gratified with proſperous Succeſſes, with a daily increaſe of Riches and Honours: Envy, and Hatred, and Revenge, are pleaſing Paſſions, when men have their Enemies at their feet, and can trample on them at pleaſure: Tho Intemperance, and Luſt, and Prodigality,

may ruin an Eſtate; Fraud, Injuſtice, and Oppreſſion may get one; and as hurtful as ſome Vices are to our Health, a Cautious Sinner (and ſuch there are in the world) may be very wicked without injuring his Health, or ſhortning his Life: And as infamous as Sin is, this may be ſo concealed and palliated by external Honours, that the ſinner ſhall not feel it, nor bad men ſee it, nor good men dare take notice of it.

So that theſe natural Rewards and Puniſhments which God has entailed on Virtue and Vice, may either wholly, or in a great meaſure, be defeated by the great external Calamities of good men, and by the great Proſperity of the wicked; and therefore if it be God's will, that Good men ſhall be happy, and the Wicked miſerable, as theſe natural Rewards and Puniſhments prove that it is, unleſs he will ſuffer himſelf to be defeated in the very end for which he made man, (which we can never ſuppoſe of ſo infinitely wiſe and powerful a Being) he muſt at leaſt in all ſuch caſes interpoſe by his Providence for the protection of good men, and the puniſhment of the wicked in this world, and reſerve their final Rewards and Puniſhments for the world to come.

Had Man preſerved his Innocence, and kept his original ſtate in Paradiſe, Virtue would then have been a reward unto it ſelf, and have furniſhed us with all the internal Principles of Happineſs, as Paradiſe did with all the external Proviſions and Delights of Nature: But ſince we are thruſt into this world, where good men live among the bad, expoſed to all the accidents of Mortality, and

and injuries of men, tho theſe natural Rewards and Puniſhments are a great Inſtrument of Providence ſtill, yet it is neceſſary God ſhould take good men into his more particular care in this world, and tranſlate them to ſome more perfect ſtate of Happineſs; ſince as the world now is, it is impoſſible a Divine Virtue ſhould receive its compleat Reward and Recompence here: So that it ſeems as demonſtrable to me, that God governs this world at preſent, and will judge us in the next, as that he has made an eſſential difference between Virtue and Vice, and entailed natural Rewards and Puniſhments on them, which are of no uſe but for the Government of the world, and as things now are, cannot in many inſtances attain that end, without a Providence in this world, and a Judgment in the next.

6. Theſe natural Rewards and Puniſhments of Virtue and Vice, are a natural Proof and Evidence of the future Rewards and Puniſhments of good and bad men, or of a future Judgment; and the reaſon of it is plain, becauſe Piety and Virtue is a happy Nature, and Sin and Vice a miſerable Nature; and therefore at one time or other Virtue muſt make men happy, and Vice miſerable: Nature will act like it ſelf, and produce its proper Effects, unleſs it be hindred by ſome external Force, and whenever that Force is removed, it will return to it ſelf again.

Tho the nature of Piety and Virtue be ſuch as to make a Reaſonable Creature happy, yet we know what it is that either abates or in a great meaſure deſtroys the happineſs of good men in this ſtate; they live here in Earthly Bodies, which have ſtrong ſenſual Appetites and

Passions, and they feel all the pains and pleasures of the Body, which makes many acts of Virtue difficult and uneasy, in resisting the impressions of Sense, and denying the gratification of the flesh: This World is the Empire of Sense, every thing in it courts and flatters our Senses, and draws off our Minds from the Spiritual Delights of Virtue and Religion, which are the proper and natural Delights of a reasonable Spirit, and at best extremely dull the Spiritual Sensation and Relish of the Soul, and make the Delights of Religion faint and languid, which must proportionably abate our spiritual Pleasures.

These mortal Bodies want a great many necessaries and conveniences of Life, the care of which employs most of our Thoughts and Time; and tho our Secular Affairs will furnish us with frequent opportunities of exercising great and excellent Virtues, yet the world is apt to gain too much upon us by our constant Conversation with it; and as Flesh and Sense prevails, so the Spirit loses; and if this does not defile the Soul with worldly Lusts, yet it takes us off very much from the frequent and vigorous acts of a Divine Life, which is the true happiness of a reasonable Soul.

But then these mortal Bodies are exposed to great Wants and Sufferings; bad men are injurious, and Meekness, and Patience, and such tame and gentle Virtues encourage their Injuries; nay, true Piety and Religion it self may be the cause and reason of our Sufferings; and when the Body suffers, the Soul suffers with it, and this stifles the present pleasures and satisfaction of Virtue;

Virtue; and nothing can ſupport the Spirits of good men under ſuch Sufferings, but the future expectations of great Rewards. So that in this ſtate Virtue alone is not a ſufficient Reward to it ſelf; for either its Pleaſures are but faint and languid, or its Sufferings over-balance its Pleaſures.

But yet if we will but ſuppoſe a good man removed into ſuch a ſtate, where Virtue and Piety will have its free, unreſtrained, undiſturbed exerciſe, and can produce its natural effects, without any hindrance and interruption, then it is demonſtrable that Piety and Virtue muſt make men happy; and this ſecures the Happineſs of good men, whenever they remove out of theſe Bodies, and out of this World.

When theſe Bodies and this World can no longer tempt or diſturb us with its Pains or Pleaſures; when the Care and Buſineſs of this world can no longer divert and employ our Thoughts; when bad men can no longer injure us; when our Souls are ſet at liberty to exerciſe all their Rational Powers, when we remove into a world of Spirits, and converſe only with Spiritual Objects, which will as ſtrongly affect our Minds, as the things of this world do our Senſes, then Virtue will and muſt be a Reward unto it ſelf; then the Pleaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, and Divine Paſſions, will be raviſhing and tranſporting.

Thus on the other hand, the nature of Vice is ſuch, as to make a reaſonable Creature miſerable; but yet a great Proſperity in this world, and a confluence of all ſenſual Enjoyments, may at preſent palliate and diſſemble, or ſuſpend theſe

malignant Influences of a Vicious Nature, may make men unsensible of the want of true Rational and Divine Pleasures, or of the pain and disturbance of sinful Passions; may bind up our Reason and Conscience, and give such an empire and predominancy to Sense, that we can neither understand nor relish any other Pleasures but those of the Body, and think our selves compleatly happy while we have these: But if we will suppose such men stript of Flesh and Sense, thrust out of these Bodies, and out of this World, and there is an end of their sensual Happiness, and a sensualized Soul is capable of no other; and when all other Objects are removed, and such sinful and distempered Minds are brought acquainted with themselves, when the Virtue of these Opiates is spent, and the Soul recovers its sense again, then every vicious Passion proves a Fury; then Guilt and Shame, and Fear, and Despair, and raging Remorse, act their several Tragedies in such a miserable Soul. This is the true nature of sinful and disordered Passions; and thus they must do when they act like themselves; and thus they will do, when they are let loose upon us in the other world.

So that the natural Rewards and Punishments of Virtue and Vice, that Virtue in its own nature is the Life, the Happiness, Vice the Death and Misery of a reasonable Soul, do necessarily prove that if good and bad men remove out of this world of Sense into a world of Spirits, Piety and Virtue must make men happy, and Vice miserable; and we may take it for granted, that God will reward a happy, and punish a miserable Nature.

7. These

7. These natural Rewards and Punishments of Virtue and Vice are a great Instrument of Providence, as they are a most effectual Antidote and Remedy against Superstition, which corrupts the Manners of Men, and debauches the world.

By Superstition, I mean all those hypocritical Arts of appeasing God and procuring his Favour without obeying his Laws or reforming our Sins: Infinite such Superstitions have been invented by *Heathens*, by *Jews*, by *Christians* themselves, especially by the *Church of Rome*, which abounds with them: Now these Superstitions do not only spoil all Religion, but corrupt mens Lives, and give them great security and impudence in sinning, which overturns the good Government of the World. For while men persuade themselves, that they may live as they list, and commit what villanies they please, and yet escape the Wrath and Vengeance, nay obtain the Favour of God, both in this world and in the next, it sets them free from all Laws and Government, and leaves no restraint on them, but what the Laws of Men, and the Rods and Axes of Princes lay on them.

But when men consider, that God has so contrived the nature of things, that Vertue must make men happy, and Vice miserable, they cannot imagine, that God can be reconciled to wicked men, unless they think that he will alter the nature of Virtue and Vice for them; the Rewards and Punishments, the Happiness and Misery of good and bad men are not now arbitrary things, at the disposal of God's arbitrary will and pleasure, but God must new make Man again, to

make

make good men miserable and bad men happy: they may as well expect ease in a Fit of the Gout or Stone, or Health in the Paroxysms of a Feaver, as that a wicked and corrupt Nature should receive the Rewards of Religion and Virtue.

This is the first Evidence we have of a Divine Providence, which governs the world, that Divine Justice which is interwoven in the nature of things, which has annexed such natural Rewards and Punishments to Virtue and Vice, and thereby marked them out for the proper Objects of God's Favour or Vengeance.

II. Another Evidence of God's Providence and Government, is the institution of Humane Governments for the Punishment of Wickedness and the Rewards of Virtue; it is very plain in Scripture, that Humane Power and Authority is ordained by God; I need only direct you to 13 *Rom.* for the proof of it: though indeed the nature of the thing proves it self, if we allow that God made the world; for he has made man such a Creature, that Humane Government is absolutely necessary, and to make Humane Government necessary is a natural Institution of it. Man is a sociable Creature, who cannot live alone, but must unite into Societies, and the experience of Mankind proves, that Societies cannot be preserved without Civil Government, to maintain the Rights, and to restrain the Violences and Injuries of men; that if God had not by any direct and immediate Institution set up any Government, nor invested any particular persons with Authority and Power to govern others, yet men, if they would

would live together, which is neceſſary to the happineſs of Humane Life, muſt ſet up a Government themſelves by mutual conſent, and intruſt ſome perſons with the adminiſtration of it: to be ſure thus it is, there is no Nation in the world without ſome kind of Government; and God, who made the world, has made it neceſſary that it ſhould be ſo; and whatever the nature of things makes neceſſary, ought to be aſcribed to the deſign and contrivance of the wiſe Maker of them: I have often deſpiſed the Reaſonings of a late Atheiſtical Philoſopher, who has contributed ſo much to the debauching this Age; who will by no means allow, that there is any ſuch thing as a Law of Nature, but what other men call Laws of Nature, he reſolves into arbitrary Compacts and Agreements among men, and induſtriouſly proves, how neceſſary it is for men to conſent to ſuch Laws, if they would live happily together; as if there could be a plainer demonſtration, or a better definition of a Law of Nature, than what the Nature of things makes neceſſary to the Happineſs of Mankind, and of Humane Societies; for if this be not a Law of Nature, nothing is. And whatever Laws and Inſtitutions neceſſarily reſult from the Nature of Things, muſt be owing to the Author of Nature.

This is ſufficient to the deſign of my preſent Argument, to prove, that God does take care of the Government of the World, in that he has inſtituted Humane Government, which is ſo great an Inſtrument of his Providence; which indeed our Experience tells us, lays greater Reſtraints in many caſes upon the Luſts and Paſ-

Passions of men, than the Hopes and Fears of the other world do. Now will any man say, that God takes no care of the Government of the world, when in all Nations he has his Officers and Ministers to execute Justice, and to maintain Peace and Order? We may as well say, that a Prince neglects the Government of his Kingdom, because he does not do every thing in his own Person, but by his Ministers: it becomes the Wisdom and Majesty of the Divine Providence to govern the world by Humane Methods, and by the Ministry of his Creatures, as far as it can be so governed, and not to interpose by an immediate Power, but in urgent Necessity, where Humane Methods fail.

3. And this we have plain Proofs of also, that God does interpose by a secret and invisible Providence to supply the defects, or correct the Miscarriages of Publick Government, or to reward and punish Men, and take care of his Creatures, in such Instances as fall not under the cognizance of Humane Government.

I confess, it is no easy matter in ordinary cases to prove the interposal of the Divine Providence, because God brings great things to pass by Natural Causes, Unseen Accidents, or the Ministry of men, while they seem to follow their own Natures, and to pursue their private Interests, Designs and Passions. For in all such Events we know not what to attribute to God, and what to Creatures, when God concurs with Creatures by a secret and invisible Influence and Power, which makes such men as are unwilling to believe a Providence, to ascribe all to Crea-

Creatures, who are the visible Actors in it: and therefore to satisfy you, that God does by a wise and just, though many times an invisible Power and Influence over-rule all Humane Affairs, consider with me:

1. That we have many Examples of God's governing the World by an immediate and visible Power, which proves, that at least in such cases he does concern himself in Humane Affairs, to reward good men, and to punish the wicked. If we will allow the Books of *Moses* and *Joshua* to be a true History, we need no other proof of this: there we read, that God destroyed the old World by a deluge of Water, and preserved *Noah* and his Family in the Ark; that he destroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* with Fire from Heaven, and sent his Angels to fetch *Lot* out of it; there we read all the Miracles God wrought in *Egypt* by the hand of *Moses* for the punishment of the *Egytians*, and the deliverance of *Israel*; how God overthrew *Pharoah* and his Host in the Red Sea, which divided its waters, and gave a safe passage to the Armies of *Israel*; by what a long series and succession of Miracles God led *Israel* through the Wilderness, punished their rebellion and wickedness, destroyed their Enemies, and gave them possession of the promised Land; how he delivered them his Laws from Mount *Sinai*, in an audible Voice, and with a terrible Appearance; placed his Tabernacle among them, where he dwelt, and from whence he gave forth his Oracles and Responses, and governed *Israel* as visibly as a Temporal Prince governs his Subjects.

This

This is an irresistible proof, that God did govern the World in the days of *Noah*, when he destroyed the whole World for their Wickedness; that in the days of *Abraham* and *Lot* he was not an idle Spectator of the Wickedness of men; that in the days of *Moses* he undertook the Punishment of *Egypt* with his own Hand, and governed *Israel* by an immediate Power: And why then should we doubt whether God governs the World at other times, when he does not interpose by such an immediate and miraculous Power? Is God less concerned in the Government of the World now, than he was in former days? Is he less concerned to govern other Nations, than he was to govern the *Jews*? Is God the God of the *Jews*, and is he not the God of the *Gentiles*? The Prophesy of *Daniel* concerning the Rise, and Growth, and Decay of the four Monarchies is a plain proof, that the Providence of God was not confined to *Judea*: Or do we think, that nothing is to be attributed to God, but only some miraculous and supernatural Effects? As if God could not govern his Creatures without offering a perpetual Violence to their Natures, which would be a great blemish to his Wisdom in making the World, if he cannot govern it without unmaking it again; for to alter the Nature of Things is in part to unmake them; as if God could not steer and direct the Course of Nature by an invisible Hand? as if he could not influence the minds of Men, and govern their thoughts, and counsels, and passions, without an audible Voice from Heaven? God never intended to govern the World by a constant Series of Miracles, for he can govern

vern the world without them; and it is much better that he ſhould, for it offers leſs Violence to mens minds, and is a greater trial of their Faith and Virtue: But ſince bad men are ſo deſirous to deliver themſelves from the fears of an inviſible Power and Juſtice, it was fitting that God ſhould give the world ſome plain and undeniable Teſtimonies of his Providence and Government, to convince them, that when he does not ſeem to take notice, he ſtill preſides over all Human Affairs, and does whatſoever pleaſeth him both in Heaven and Earth.

Thus much I'm ſure is plain; that theſe viſible Demonſtrations of God's Government anſwer all the Objections of Atheiſts and Infidels againſt Providence: if the *Epicurean* thinks that the Government of the World, and the Care of every particular Creature in it, is too great a diſturbance to the profound Eaſe, and Reſt, and perfect Happineſs of his God; thoſe undeniable Examples of God's Providence, particularly in the conſtant Government of the *Jewiſh* Nation, is a plain Confutation of this; for the Government of the whole World is no greater Diſturbance to an Infinite Mind, than the Government of one Nation is; and yet God did not neglect the Government of the *Jews*, for fear of diſturbing his Eaſe and Reſt.

If you think the Affairs of the world, and the Government of Creatures, below the care of an Infinite Being, too inconſiderable for him to mind; How is This World more below his care than the Old World was? Or how is the whole World more unworthy of his Care than the *Jewiſh* Nation was? We may admire indeed the Love,

Love, and Goodneſs, and Condeſcention of God, that he humbleth himſelf to behold the things both in Heaven and in Earth; but though it is reaſon enough to admire his Goodneſs, it is no reaſon to deny his Providence.

If we object that great Wickedneſs which has over-run the World, that Violence, Injuſtice, Lewdneſs, which is committed in it, this had been a much better Argument againſt God's governing the Old World, when all Fleſh had corrupted its ways, than it is now; and yet they found God a Righteous and Terrible Judge; ſo did *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, ſo did the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, when the meaſure of their Iniquity was full.

If we object the Sufferings of good men, and the Proſperity of the wicked, againſt Providence; thus it was in the *Jewiſh* Nation, though God was manifeſtly their King and Governor; as appears from the many Complaints of *David* and *Solomon*, and the Prophets, about this matter: And if good men may ſuffer, and the wicked proſper, in a Nation which God does govern, this is no Argument againſt God's Providence and Government of the whole World.

2. Since it is evident from theſe Miraculous Providences that God does at leaſt ſometimes interpoſe in the Government of the World, and that this is a good Argument that he governs the World at other times alſo, when he does not work Miracles; I ſay, having laid this Foundation, it is no hard matter to trace the plain Footſteps of Providence in more ordinary Occurrences; for we may eaſily diſcover a Divine Wiſdom and Juſtice in many Events, which have nothing miraculous

lous in them: Whatever ſavours of deep Counſel and Deſign, and is of mighty Conſequence to the Government of the world, and yet is brought to paſs without any Humane Foreſight and Contrivance, not only beſides, but contrary to the Intentions and Deſigns of the viſible Actors, ought to be attributed to an inviſible Wiſdom; for Chance can no more govern the World wiſely, than it can make it.

When great and wonderful things are done by an unſeen concurrence of many caſual and fortuitous Events; when the greateſt Politicians are out-witted, their Counſels diſtracted, their Meaſures broken, their deſigns defeated, without any viſible Wiſdom or Power to oppoſe them; when the Hearts of Princes are turned like the Rivers of Waters, and ſuch an unaccountable Change manifeſtly ſerves ſome great Ends of Providence, when Men of contrary Intereſts and Factions, without adviſing with each other, or reconciling their own Quarrels, ſhall unexpectedly conſpire in the ſame thing, and intend to ſerve their own contrary ends by it; I ſay in ſuch caſes, whether it have the Approbation of God or no, his Hand is certainly in it.

When the Puniſhments of bad men carry the Marks and Characters of their Sins on them; when thoſe who in a Drunken Quarrel have killed their Friends or their Neighbours, and eſcaped Publick Juſtice, fall in the ſame manner in a Drunken Quarrel; when an Unjuſt Oppreſſor is ruined by Unjuſt Oppreſſion; and thoſe who have ſpoiled Widows and Orphans, leave their own Widows and Orphans a rich prey to other Spoilers: this made *Adonibezek* confeſs the Righteouſ-

neſs of the Divine Providence, when he had his Thumbs and great Toes cut off; *Threeſcore and ten Kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, ſo hath the Lord requited me*, 1. Judges 7.

When ſecret Sins, eſpecially barbarous Murders, are diſcovered by ſome ſtrange Accident, and ſuch Sinners brought to puniſhment; when wicked and miſchievous Deſigns and Conſpiracies are defeated at the very inſtant of Execution, as in the Caſe of *Haman* and *Mordecai*, and the Gun-Powder Treaſon; when men venture upon any wickedneſs to avoid a Miſchief which they foreſee, and by that very means bring that Miſchief on themſelves, which they intended to prevent; theſe and ſuch like are remarkable Inſtances of a Divine and Unſeen Juſtice which governs the World.

And not to inſiſt too long on this; Notwithſtanding all the Diſorders and Irregularities we complain of in the world, notwithſtanding the many Afflictions and Sufferings of good Men, and the great proſperity of the wicked, whoever conſiders things wiſely, muſt confeſs it an argument of a wiſe Providence, that the world is kept in ſuch good order as it is; that good men are no greater Sufferers than they are, when there are ſo many wicked men to oppreſs them, but commonly make as good a ſhift here as bad men do; nay, excepting the caſe of Perſecution, and excepting ſome very few proſperous Sinners, eſcape much better than wicked Men do; that if we could adjuſt the Account, and make fair Allowances for that vaſt diſproportion there is between the numbers of good and bad Men, it would be found

found that good men, notwithſtanding all the Diſadvantages they labour under, are much the moſt proſperous part of mankind.

When we conſider how often the Power of the world, and the Adminiſtration of Juſtice is in corrupt and wicked hands, it is wonderful to ſee, that as to the general Concerns of Mankind, Juſtice is ſo equally adminiſtred, that Human Societies are not broken and diſſolved by the furious Luſts and Paſſions of men.

It is wonderful to obſerve what an unſeen and ſteady Hand holds the Balance of the World, and ſets Bounds to the Ambition of Princes, and keeps the moſt threatning Torrents within their own banks; nay, when the world ſeems to be in Confuſion and inextricable Diſorders, paſt the redreſs of all Human Wiſdom and Counſel, reſtores Peace and Order again. Such Events as theſe can be aſcribed only to ſome unſeen Wiſdom and Power which governs the World.

3. Having ſhewn what Evidence we have that God does govern the world at preſent, let us now conſider the Force of this Conſequence, That therefore God will Judge the World hereafter. Now this ſeems to me to be a ſelf-evident Conſequence, that if God govern the world, he will judge it; that is, reward every man according to his works; for the principal act of Government is to Judge; and it is impoſſible he ſhould be a wiſe and juſt Governor who does not judge.

The difference between the Providence of God, or his preſent Government of the world, and a Final Judgment, is no more but this; That they have different ends, and therefore muſt have dif-

ferent Rules and Meaſures, but they are both God's judging the world; and therefore if God begins his Judgment of Mankind in this world, there is no reaſon to doubt but he will finiſh and perfect his Judgment in the next: If he judges Mankind now as far as is proper to the ſtate of this world, it is a ſufficient reaſon to believe that in the next world he will exerciſe ſuch acts of Judgment as are proper for that ſtate.

The great Ends of Providence in this world, are the Preſervation of Human Societies, the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and the Diſcouragement of Vice, to keep men under Diſcipline, to lay Reſtraints upon their Luſts and Paſſions, to wean them from the love of this world, to exerciſe their Graces, their Faith, and Patience, and Charity; and by the different methods of Kindneſs and Severity, (as his own Wiſdom judges beſt and fitteſt) to reclaim the wicked and the wandring Prodigals, and to advance good men to greater degrees and perfections of Goodneſs: The end of God's judging mankind in the next world, is to allot men ſuch Rewards and Puniſhments as are proportioned to their works and deſerts, to beſtow Eternal Life on good men, and to execute the threatning of Eternal Death upon bad men, which is the final Concluſion and Conſummation of Judgment: And if God judges all men in this world as far as is neceſſary for this world, it is reaſonable to think that he will perfect his Judgment in the world to come.

Now it is plain he does the firſt, as will appear from particulars: He corrects the Miſcarriages of Publick Government, Publick Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, a Publick Contempt of God and of Religion,

ligion, and of all things ſacred, a general Corruption of Manners, and an Inundation of Wickedneſs. Such Nations ſeldom eſcape long without a ſevere Scourge, unleſs God makes uſe of them to ſcourge other Nations as wicked as themſelves. But a Righteous and Religious Nation, which preſerves Juſtice among men, and the Knowledge, and Reverence, and Worſhip of God, is the Darling and Favourite of Providence, and is bleſſed with all proſperous Succeſſes both at Home and Abroad: So the Wiſe Man tells us, *that righteouſneſs exalteth a nation, but ſin is the reproach of any people.* Thus it is apt to do of it ſelf, but the Divine Juſtice and Providence takes care that it ſhall do ſo: For tho every particular good man is not rewarded, nor every particular bad man puniſhed in this world, yet God governs Kingdoms and Nations by a more equal and ſteady Juſtice: For indeed publick Societies are the principal Objects of his Rewards and Puniſhments in this world, becauſe the good government of mankind depends ſo much upon it. The Virtues or Vices of private men have but a narrow influence, and can do but little good or hurt; but publick Government is a publick Good or Miſchief, and the Diſorders of it are like an Eclipſe of the Sun, which brings Darkneſs upon the World; and therefore ſuch a very wicked Nation is ſeldom long unpuniſhed, or a righteous Nation oppreſſed. And this is a viſible Exerciſe of God's Judgment in this world, in rewarding or puniſhing Kingdoms and Nations, which are the great Wheels of Providence whereon the regular Motion and good Government of the World depends; as I obſerved to you before,

that God governs the world by erecting Human Governments, and therefore is more eſpecially concerned to govern them.

Thus in order to diſcourage Wickedneſs, and to encourage true Piety and Virtue, which is another End of Providence, it is not neceſſary that God ſhould reward every good man, or puniſh every bad man in this world; ſome few great Examples of ſuch Rewards and Puniſhments are ſufficient to this purpoſe, eſpecially if they are ſo many and ſo frequent that no bad man can promiſe himſelf Impunity even in this Life, nor any good man have reaſon to deſpond, or diſtruſt Providence. and as many Complaints as there are of the Proſperity of bad men, and the Sufferings of the good, yet every Age, and every Countrey, nay, almoſt every Village, will furniſh us with ſo many Examples of miſerable Sinners, and of the viſible Rewards of Virtue, as are abundantly enough to make all conſidering men reverence the Divine Juſtice and Providence; and therefore God exerciſes as great, as frequent, as viſible acts of Judgment, as the ſtate of this world requires.

Eſpecially when we conſider, That this world is a ſtate of Diſcipline, a School of Virtue, where we muſt learn to govern our Paſſions and Appetites, to conquer vicious Habits, and to live above the Body and the Pleaſures of it, to forgive Injuries, to love Enemies, to ſuffer patiently, to be contented with a little, to truſt Providence, to live by Faith and Hope of unſeen things. Now ſuch a ſtate as this will not

not admit of an exact Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments. Bad men muſt not always be puniſhed for their Sins, becauſe ſometimes external Proſperity, and a ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs, may work more kindly on them; or if they be puniſhed, their puniſhments muſt be rather Corrections than Acts of Juſtice; that is, they muſt not always bear proportion to their Deſerts, but to their Cure, as a Father corrects his Child, not ſo much to puniſh his Fault, as to reform it: And for the ſame reaſon good men muſt not always be proſperous, for they may need Adverſity to exerciſe, increaſe, and brighten their Virtues, and to make them greater Examples to the world; or if God ſees fit to reward them, it muſt be in ſuch inſtances, and ſuch proportions as they can bear; not always what they may deſerve, but what will be for their good.

Thus God governs the world with great Juſtice and Judgment, as far as the ſtate of this world requires and admits; and what reaſon then is there to queſtion whether God will judge Mankind in the world to come?

His Exerciſe of Juſtice and Judgment in this world proves that he is the Judge of the world, not an idle and unconcern'd Spectator of Human Actions; that he intereſts himſelf in the Affairs of Mankind, is ſolicitous to make all his Creatures happy; is an Enemy to Wickedneſs and to wicked men, but the Friend, Protector, and Father of good men: And if God be the Judge of the world, why ſhould we think that he will not judge it? Nay, if he actually execute Juſtice and Judgment in this world, why ſhould we think

that he has reſerved no Acts of Judgment for the next world, which is a more proper place for it, and requires ſome different Acts of Judgment peculiar to that ſtate. If God reward good men and puniſh wicked men in this world, why ſhould we think that he has reſerved no Rewards or Puniſhments for them in the next? eſpecially if we conſider theſe two things.

I. That it is very evident that the Judgment of God in this world is not Final; that is, that the Bleſſings God beſtows upon good men in this world are not the only Rewards he intends for them, nor the preſent Evils and Calamities he brings upon bad men, their only Puniſhments: This is very plain and expreſs in Scripture, but I muſt not appeal to Scripture now, while I am arguing from Reaſon, and therefore muſt conſider what Natural Indications we have of this: As,

1. That good and bad men live together, intermixt in this World, in the ſame Countrey, the ſame Neighbourhood, nay, the ſame Family, and therefore God does not intend finally to reward good men, or puniſh the wicked here, for that requires a Separation of them; the ſame place will not admit of perfect Happineſs and perfect Miſery, which muſt be the effect of a Final Judgment, for their very Neighbourhood will neceſſarily allay each other.

Unleſs God ſhould make good men other Creatures than they now are, it would be impoſſible for them to ſee the perpetual Executions, and the amazing Miſeries of Sinners, without diſturbing their own Eaſe and Reſt; and then they could not

not be perfectly happy in this world. As things now are, the many Miseries and Calamities of Human Life exercise the Pity and Compassion of good men, and afflict them with a tender and painful sense of other mens Sufferings; and what would it then do, were all wicked men punished in this world according to their Deserts, which would make this world the very Image and Picture of Hell; a very unfit place for good men to be happy in. And if good men were all perfectly rewarded in this world, bad men who live and converse among them could not be perfectly miserable; for to live in a happy Place, and among happy People, is some allay of Misery, at least it is not like being condemned to Eternal Night and Darkness, to the Company of Devils and damned Spirits.

Besides this, without a miraculous Providence, good men cannot live among the wicked, but they must suffer from them; nor bad men live among the good, but they must receive good from them; and therefore neither of them can be perfectly happy, or perfectly miserable, while they live together.

Were there no more in it but this, the very wickedness of men, their Lewdness, Injustice, Oppression, Prophaneness, Contempt of God and Religion, would be a perpetual Trouble and Vexation to the good, as the Soul of righteous *Lot* was grieved with the filthy Conversation of the wicked, and this makes a great abatement in their Happiness: And yet it would not be a less Miracle to preserve all good men from the Injuries of the wicked, who live among them, especially when they are the prevailing Numbers, and have great Power

Power to do mischief, than it was to preserve *Daniel* in the Lyons Den, from being devoured by those hungry and ravenous Beasts.

Nay, it is impossible that God should punish all wicked men in this world, without involving some good men in their Calamities and Sufferings: When God punishes a wicked Nation with Plague, or Famine, or Sword, when he Fires a City, and reduces all the Buildings of it to a heap of Rubbish, how is it possible but that good and bad men who live together, must suffer in such a common Calamity? There is reason enough why God should now sometimes permit this, because even good men may deserve such corrections, and he can easily recompence them other ways; but this would be no reason, if good men were to receive their final Rewards in this world; for then they ought to be exempted from the Punishments of the wicked.

Thus how impossible is it for God to punish all bad men here, without punishing good men in them? Have not many good men very wicked Relations, for whom they have a very tender Affection; Parents, or Brethren, or Children, or those who are nearer to them than all these? And can they be contented to be witnesses of their Sufferings? This cannot be, unless good men in such cases could divest themselves of natural Affections, which we see is not, and cannot be done, and if it could, would be a greater mischief to the world, than the sufferings of bad men would do good to it.

And for the same reason bad men cannot be perfectly miserable in this world, while good men live among them; for unless God should for-

forbid the exerciſe of ſome of the moſt excellent Virtues of the Chriſtian Life, and which are in themſelves moſt beneficial to the world; good men will exerciſe great Charity and Goodneſs, Forgiveneſs and Patience towards the wicked, will relieve their Wants, and pity their Sufferings, and be their Patrons and Advocates both with God and Men; that is, will do good to them, and procure Bleſſings for them.

The Interceſſions of good men very often divert Judgments, and obtain great Bleſſings for a very wicked Nation. *Sodom* it ſelf had eſcaped upon the interceſſion of *Abraham*, had there been Ten Righteous Perſons found in it: And God very often ſpares a wicked Nation for the ſake of good men who live among them, and muſt ſuffer by ſuch publick Judgments; that is, he ſpares bad men to ſave the righteous. Thus God beſtows many Temporal Bleſſings upon the Friends, Relations, and Poſterity of good men, tho they are wicked; and this is part of the Reward of Piety and Virtue in this world; and therefore all good men cannot be rewarded, and all wicked men puniſhed in this world; becauſe many good men muſt be puniſhed in the Puniſhments of the wicked, and many wicked men muſt eſcape, nay, muſt proſper in the world, as a Reward of the good; which is not conſidered by thoſe who make the Impunity and Proſperity of ſome bad men an Argument againſt Providence; when the very Proſperity of theſe bad men is many times the Reward of Virtue, and a deſign'd Favour and Indulgence to the good. But what I have now ſaid, plainly proves that God's Judgment in this world is not final, becauſe

cauſe good and bad men live together; and it is abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhould be parted, when God comes to render to every man according to his Works; as our Saviour declares that they ſhall be at the Final Judgment, when the Sheep ſhall be placed on his Right hand, and the Goats on the left.

2. That God's Judgment in this world is not Final, appears from this, that all good men are not rewarded, nor all wicked men puniſhed in this world, as they ought to be, if God did not intend to judge men in the next world for what they have done in this.

That this is ſo, I need not prove, becauſe we every day ſee it; and this is made a great Objection againſt Providence, that many bad men are proſperous, and many good men afflicted. And a fooliſh Objection it is againſt Providence, but a very good Argument for a Future Judgment.

When we have ſo many Arguments to prove that God does govern the world, that he does even in this life reward good men, and puniſh the wicked, as much as is neceſſary for the good Government of the world, it is very abſurd to confute all this only by ſaying that he does not govern the world as we think he ought to govern it; that is, that he does not puniſh every bad man, nor reward every good man in this life. Whoever would make good this Argument, muſt prove, that there is no other world after this, wherein God can reward thoſe good men, and puniſh thoſe wicked men, whom he has not ſufficiently rewarded or puniſhed in this life; or he muſt prove that it is abſolutely

abſolutely neceſſary to the ends of Government, to reward every good man, and to puniſh every wicked man in this world, and not to defer their final Rewards and Puniſhments to the next; for if it be granted that there is another world after this, and that God if he ſees fit may defer the final Rewards and Puniſhments of good and bad men to the next world; then this is no Objection at all againſt Providence.

But then inſtead of being an Objection againſt Providence, it becomes a very ſtrong Argument for a Future Judgment: For if God does govern and judge the world, and yet Juſtice is not equally and impartially adminiſtred to all men, but ſome good men are greatly afflicted, and ſome wicked men are greatly proſperous, it is little leſs than a Demonſtration, that there is ſome other Judgment to come, beſides what God exerciſes in this world: For it is certain, if God judge the world at all, he will judge it righteouſly, and will render to every man according to his Works; for Juſtice and Righteouſneſs is eſſential to the Notion of a God; and therefore ſince we ſee this is not always done in this world, we muſt conclude that God's Judgment of Mankind does not end with this world, but extends to a Future State; that is, that there is a Judgment to come after this life, when we ſhall be rewarded according to our works.

3. That the Judgment of God in this world is not Final, appears from this, that the Rewards and Puniſhments of this Life cannot be the final and proper Rewards and Puniſhments of good and bad men: External Proſperity, and external Miſeries and Sufferings, are the only Rewards and Puniſhments

niſhments we are capable of in this life; and therefore when God would viſibly expreſs his Kindneſs and Favour to good men, he makes them proſperous, and when he would expreſs his Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt the wicked, he puniſhes them with ſome Temporal Evils: And this is all that can be done in this world, except the peace and ſatisfaction, or the guilty remorſe of our own Conſciences, which God can heighten as he ſees fit. But now it is certain, that external Proſperity is not the proper and peculiar Reward of Virtue, nor external Sufferings the peculiar Puniſhment of Sin; for if they were, a juſt and righteous Judge could never permit bad men to be proſperous, nor good men to be afflicted, if Proſperity were due only to Virtue, and Afflictions and Sufferings to Vice: The promiſcuous Diſtribution of the good and evil things of this world, both to good and to bad men, proves that Proſperity is not always good, nor Adverſity always evil; that Proſperity is rather a preſent Encouragement, than the proper Reward of Virtue, and External Calamities rather a Curb and Reſtraint, than the proper puniſhment of Vice; and therefore when God can ſerve the ends of his Providence by it, he may make bad men proſperous, and afflict the good, for this is not to transfer the neceſſary and peculiar Rewards of Virtue upon bad men, nor to inflict the peculiar puniſhments of Sin upon good men, which cannot be done by a juſt and righteous Judge: Now if the Happineſs and Miſeries of this life be not the proper and peculiar and inſeperable Rewards and Puniſhments of Virtue and Vice, then there are ſome other Rewards and Puniſhments reſerved for good and bad men

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in the next world; ſuch Rewards as no bad man ſhall ſhare in, and ſuch puniſhments as ſhall not be inflicted on any good man, that is, beſides the Providence and Judgment of God in this world, God will judge good and bad men in the next, and render to every man according to his works.

II. The Nature of the Divine Providence and Government, and the Manner and Circumſtances of its Adminiſtration in this world, are a plain Indication of a Future Judgment.

The viſible deſign of Providence is not to reward all good men, and to puniſh the wicked in this world, for this is not done; but to curb and reſtrain wickedneſs, and to encourage Piety and Virtue; and therefore God gives us ſuch Examples of his Juſtice, as are ſufficient to over-awe mankind, and make them fear his Power and Vengeance; and ſuch examples of his Favour, Kindneſs, and regard to good men, as may encourage them to be good, and virtuous, with the expectations of great Rewards: But what does all this ſignify, unleſs it proves that God will puniſh bad men, and reward the good? and if it proves this, it muſt prove that God will do it in the next world, for it is plain that he does not do it here. And therefore if we will allow that God governs the world wiſely, we muſt confeſs that the Examples of God's Goodneſs and Juſtice in this world prove a Future Judgment; for they are not ſo univerſal as to anſwer the ends of Juſtice in rewarding good men, and puniſhing the wicked in this world; and unleſs they prove a Future Judgment, they are not ſufficient either

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to over-awe and restrain bad men, or to encourage the good; for tho the frequent Examples of God's Justice and Severity against Sin, destroys mens security in sinning; for no bad man can be sure that God will not punish him, as he does a great many other bad men; yet we daily see, they would venture this, did not the present execution of Justice threaten them with the more terrible Judgment of the next world.

Thus if we consider the Providence of God as a method of Discipline whereby he conquers mens love to sin, and breaks the Habits of Vice, or exercises and improves their Virtues; this is a very unaccountable thing, without a Future Judgment: Why should God exercise so much Patience towards wicked men, and bear so long with them, to conquer them by Methods of Kindness, were it not in great goodness to give them time for Repentance, that they may escape Eternal Miseries?

Why should God exercise men with such long and repeated Severities to conquer their love to this world, to teach them to govern their Appeties and Passions, and to make them good men, if there be no reward for Virtue and Piety in the next World?

Why should he afflict good men all their Lives, whose Virtue deserves a more prosperous Fortune, only to exercise their Faith and Patience, and to advance them still to more Divine Perfections, unless he intended to reward their present Sufferings, and their eminent Virtue with a brighter and more glorious Crown?

There

There are many paſſages of Providence, which there can be no other account given of, but that they are Methods of Diſcipline to conquer mens love to Sin, or to improve their Graces and Vertues; and I am ſure there can be no account given of this, why God ſhould with ſo much Patience and Forbearance expect the Repentance of ſome Sinners, and exerciſe good men with ſo much Severity to make them better, unleſs the Providence of God in this world have a principal regard to the Rewards and Puniſhments of the next; that is, unleſs there be a Judgment to come, to reward good men and to puniſh the wicked. This I hope is ſufficient to make good this Conſequence, That if God govern the World at preſent, he will judge it hereafter.

SECT. IV.

The Natural Preſages of Conſcience prove a Future Judgment; and if there be a Future State, there muſt be a Future Judgment.

V. THE Natural Preſages of Conſcience are another good Argument of a Future Judgment; that is, all men naturally expect to be judged, to be rewarded or puniſhed for the Good or Evil they do; and this is a ſtrong Natural Preſumption that God will Judge the World. This is an Argument of great moment, and therefore deſerves to be particularly explained; to which purpoſe I ſhall, 1. ſhew you, That it is ſo. 2. That this is not an artificial Impreſſion, but the natural Senſe of our own Minds. And

3. That this does prove, that God will Judge the the world, and render to every man according to his Works.

I. That it is ſo; that all men have a natural Preſage of Judgment: There is indeed a very formidable Objection againſt this, That very few men live as if they did expect to be judged. But this is as good an Argument againſt mens belief of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the expreſs Revelation of a Future Judgment, as it is againſt the Natural Senſe and Preſages of Conſcience; for there are too many who profeſs to believe the Goſpel, but do not live as if they did believe a Judgment: But I need not trouble my ſelf about this, becauſe it is an Objection only to Atheiſts and Infidels, if indeed it be an Objection to them: Other bad men, who live as if they did not believe a Judgment, yet feel in themſelves that they do believe it, and when they think of it, they believe and tremble too, as the Devils do; though at other times they are overpow'red by the World and the Fleſh, to act contrary to the Convictions of Conſcience, and the Fears of Judgment.

The Heathens themſelves, who had only the Light of Nature to direct them, were very ſenſible of the private Judgment of their own Conſciences, which did either accuſe them when they did ill, and fill them with remorſe and fear of Vengeance; or excuſe, commend and applaud them when they did well, and give them great and chearful Hopes of a Reward; as St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Rom.* 14. 15. and is frequently obſerved by the Heathen Philoſophers, Poets, Orators and Hiſtorians, as a thing univerſally acknowledged: And indeed I know no man at this day who denies it,

and

and therefore I need not prove it. All men feel this in themſelves, even Atheiſts and Infidels, whenever they are ſerious and thoughtful; when the Judgments of God overtake them, or they ſee the near Approaches of Death, and another World: The greateſt Power cannot defend men from theſe Fears; Princes and Politicians are equally expoſed to them, with meaner Subjects: Thoſe whom no Human Power can touch, are over-awed by an inviſible Juſtice.

II. Since this is univerſally acknowledged, the only queſtion is, To what cauſe to Attribute theſe Fears and Rebukes of Conſcience? The Atheiſts will by no means allow theſe Fears to be natural, but only the effects of a Superſtitious Education; as they ſay the belief of a God, and the differences of Good and Evil are. Men have been taught from their very Infancy, that there is an Inviſible Power that governs the world, which will reward good men, and puniſh the wicked, and have been frighted with the Fairy Stories of Infernal Judges, and *Styx* and *Acheron*, or Hell-fire; and this made ſuch an Impreſſion upon their tender Fancies, as can never be wore out, at leaſt not without great Induſtry and Reſolution of Mind; and this, they ſay, makes weak men conclude that they are Natural. But this is a very abſurd and ridiculous Account of the Matter, as will appear, if you conſider by what Rules we are to judge, what is Natural, and what not: For if theſe Preſages of Conſcience have all the marks and ſigns of being natural, that we can have that any thing is natural, we muſt either ſay, that nothing is natural, or that we cannot tell what is natural, and what not; or we muſt confeſs it great Perverſeneſs of

Mind, to deny that to be natural, which has all the signs and marks of being natural, that any thing can have.

Now 1. That is Natural which is universal, or common to the whole kind; for we have no other way of knowing what the Natures of Things are, but by observing what is common to all Creatures of the same Kind and Species; for nothing is common to all Individuals, but a common Nature: And if what is universal, and common to all Mankind is Natural, these Censures and Rebukes of Conscience are Natural, for they are common to all Men: For though we should grant, that some few Atheists have wholly conquered these Fears, and never feel the Lashes and Rebukes of their own Consciences, such few and rare Examples ought to be looked on as the Corruption of Human Nature, not as the Measure and Standard of it; for it is no news to say, that Human Nature may be corrupted, that the very essential Principles of it may be depraved; and in such cases we always judge, and that with very good reason, that what is most common and universal, is natural, not what is as rare and as ominous as a monstrous Birth.

2*dly*. Especially when we consider, that that is most Natural, which is born and bred with us, and is the Original State of Human Nature; for Nature is before Art, and before the voluntary Corruptions and Degeneracy of Nature. This Atheists see and confess, and therefore attribute the Belief of a God, and the Checks of Conscience, and the Fears of Judgment to Education; that these Principles were instilled into us from the beginning, and grow up with us into confirmed and setled Prejudices;

Prejudices; and I readily grant, that Education has a great ſtroke in forming our Notions, and in awakening and cultivating our Natural Reaſon; for tho we are born with a Power and Faculty of Reaſon, and our Minds are ſo framed, as to underſtand and aſſent to ſuch Truths, when they are propoſed to us; to know and acknowledge prime and original Principles at firſt view, as the Eye diſcerns Light, and diſtinguiſhes Colours; yet we are not born with the exerciſe of Reaſon, but it muſt be put into Act, and formed by Education: But this I ſay, that it is an argument how natural theſe Notions are to our Minds, that they are the firſt principles all Mankind aſſent to without difficulty or diſpute; and ſuch Principles as when men grow up, they find lye even and eaſy in their Minds: they are the firſt things which Atheiſts themſelves do naturally believe; and that they do not believe them now, is the effect of great Induſtry and Violence: It is a piece of Art to be an Atheiſt, which they are a great while a learning; which very few men, tho well diſpoſed to it, can ever learn; but to believe a God, and to fear and reverence his inviſible Power and Juſtice, is not Art but Nature, and therefore common to all Mankind, and the firſt thing they learn to believe.

3*dly*. Another Mark of what is natural is, that it is abſolutely inſeparable from Nature, or at leaſt not without extream difficulty and violence; and this proves the Hopes and Fears of good and bad men to be very natural: For how impoſſible it is to conquer theſe Fears, I appeal to your own Sence and Experience: As many bad men as there are who would be ve-

ry glad to get rid of theſe Fears, and to laugh them out of the World, there are but very few that can do it. Some men indeed ſtifle their Conſciences, and lay them aſleep by the various Arts of Superſtition, whereby they hope to appeaſe God, and to keep their Sins ſtill, or by the deceitful Vows and Promiſes of Repenting before they dye, or by perpetual Buſineſs and Entertainments, which employ their Thoughts, and keep off all melancholy Reflections, or by ſuch perpetual Debaucheries as ſtupify their Minds, and make them inſenſible; now theſe Mens Fears are ſilenced for a while, but not Conquer'd; whatever makes them reflect upon themſelves, and conſider their own State, awakens their Fears again, and makes them more outragious and tormenting than ever. The Atheiſt is certainly ſo far in the right, that there is no way to get rid of theſe Fears, but by baniſhing the Belief of a God, and of another World, out of their Minds: But few men can do this, and Atheiſts themſelves, when they have impudently enough derided the Superſtition of the reſt of the world, and think they can anſwer all the Arguments for the Being of a God, and a Future State, yet cannot wholly deliver their minds from theſe Fears; they ever and anon recur upon them, and after all their pretended Aſſurance and Confidence, they are very jealous what may be, and many times ſome croſs Accidents and Events, or the approach of Death opens their Eyes, and makes them acknowledge a God, and tremble at the thoughts of Judgment, which they had ſo long deſpiſed.

This

This is a certain proof, that theſe Fears are not owing to Education, but ſpring from Nature; for the miſtakes of Education may be rectified by Reaſon and Experience, eſpecially when they are ſuch troubleſome miſtakes, that Mankind are deſirous to get rid of them: No ſuch miſtakes could ever hold out long againſt Reaſon and Intereſt; whatever is a miſtake, may be confuted by Reaſon; and when it is mens Intereſt to diſcover the miſtake, this will make them very ſagacious in their Enquiries, and very ready to ſee their miſtake; that had the Fears of bad men been the effect only of Idle Tales, and Traditionary Fables, it is impoſſible they ſhould have withſtood all the Wit and Reaſon of Philoſophical Atheiſts; that ſuch men with all their Arguments ſhould not be able to make themſelves abſolutely ſecure, much leſs to make many Converts, tho every Age and Nation has been filled with men whoſe lives have diſpoſed them to be Atheiſts. Theſe are the general Marks and Signs of what is Natural; that which is univerſal and common to all Mankind; that which is the firſt and original Sence of Human Nature; and that which is ſo deeply fix'd in our minds, that no Art or Induſtry can wholly root it out; and all this proves, that theſe Preſages of Conſcience, the Hopes good men have of a Reward, and the Fear of Puniſhment and Vengeance, which haunts bad men, are the natural Sence of mens minds.

3*dly*. Let us now conſider the force of this Argument, how theſe Hopes and Fears of good and bad men are natural Preſages of a Future Judgment.

1. Now in the first place, I think, I may lay it down as a certain Principle, that Nature, or the natural Sence of our own Minds, does not deceive us; for if we should say it may, there is an end of all certainty; we must be Scepticks in every thing, if we cannot believe the natural Impressions upon our Minds; for I know not then, why we should believe our External Senses, what we see, or hear, or feel: If man was made by God, who is Eternal Truth, the Natural Sence of our Minds must be as true and certain, as our Bodily Senses are; for tho the Deductions of Reason are not always so necessary and certain, because men may reason wrong; yet if the first Principles of Reason, and the immediate Sence of our Minds, which are common to Human Nature, should misguide us, this were the fault not of Reasoning and Discourse, but of Nature it self, and therefore must be charged upon the Author of Nature; and certainly there cannot be so ill a contrived Creature made, as man is, who is pursued with the fears of Justice and Vengeance, when he does ill, and flattered with the promising Hopes of great Rewards when he does well, if there be no Future Judgment to reward Good men, and to punish the wicked.

2. For secondly, these Natural Hopes and Fears of good and bad men, immediately respect the Judgment of God, not of men, and concern the Rewards and Punishments of the other World, more than of this. Let bad men be never so powerful and prosperous, tho they fear no hurt from men, nor any change and alteration of their Fortune, yet the sence of Guilt distracts and terrifies them with the Fears of an Unseen and Almighty

Almighty Vengeance; and tho good men ſuffer very hard things from the world, and have no proſpect of better Uſage here, yet their Conſciences ſpeak Peace to them, and ſupport them with great Hopes; and therefore unleſs theſe Natural Hopes and Fears deceive us, good men ſhall certainly be rewarded by God, and bad men puniſhed, either in this world, or in the next, or in both.

3. We may conſider farther, that theſe Hopes and Fears of good and bad men, give a Natural Confirmation to all thoſe other Arguments which I have already urged for the proof of a Future Judgment. As to ſhew this in a few words:

1. This proves a natural ſenſe in all men, that they are accountable Creatures, and ſhall be called to an account for their Actions; For unleſs men were ſenſible of this, why ſhould their Conſciences acquit or condemn them? Why ſhould they Judge themſelves, but in relation to ſome higher Tribunal, which will certainly judge them: eſpecially when the Conſciences of bad men do not only condemn, but threaten them, and the Conſciences of good men do not only acquit and abſolve, but promiſe a Reward; for they can neither puniſh nor reward themſelves.

2. This proves the natural ſenſe we have of the eſſential Difference between Good and Evil, and that what is Good deſerves a Reward, and what is Evil deſerves Puniſhment, becauſe good men expect a Reward for the good they do, and bad men fear Puniſhment when they have done Evil; which ſhews a natural Senſe of the juſt merits and deſerts both of Good and Evil, and that they ſhall receive their juſt Rewards.

3. This

3. This proves also that natural sense mankind have, That God is the Supreme and Sovereign Lord and Judge of the world, and will judge mankind; for there is no other Tribunal which all mankind can be accountable to. The common sense of Human Nature must respect the universal Lord and Judge of the world, who has a natural right to Govern and to Judge mankind. He who made us, imprinted this sense upon our minds; for what is natural is owing only to the Author of Nature; and therefore these natural Hopes and Fears can only relate to the Government and Judgment of our Maker and Natural Lord; and then they must prove that God will judge us, that he will reward or punish us according to our works: Nay,

4*thly*, This proves, that Natural Sense men have of a just Providence which governs this world at present; for tho these natural Hopes and Fears do not give men any assurance that they shall be rewarded or punished in this world, as they deserve; yet a good Conscience, especially some great and eminent Virtues, give good men great hopes in God, and a secure trust and dependance on his Providence, even in this life; and a great sense of Guilt makes men afraid of present Vengeance; tho God may think fit to delay the Punishment of bad men till the next world, yet a guilty Conscience never thinks it self safe here: So that if there be any force in these Arguments, the accountableness of Human Nature, the Essential Differences of Good and Evil, the Natural Notions of God's Dominion and Sovereignty, and that just Providence which governs the world at present,

ſent, to prove a Future Judgment, they all receive ſtrength and confirmation from the natural Hopes and Fears of good and bad men, which are a natural Preſage of Judgment. And this is a Fifth Argument of a Future State, The Natural Preſages of Conſcience.

6. To add no more; the removing mankind out of this world into the next, proves the neceſſity of a Future Judgment: If mankind after death ſubſiſt in another ſtate, they muſt be judged, and therefore Judgment is as certain as a life after death, which I muſt take for granted in this Argument; the reaſon I believe of this is not obvious at the firſt propoſal, but it will be plain, if you conſider but ſome few things:

1. That when we go into the next world, we muſt remove into a ſtate of Happineſs or Miſery: I do not mean, that when we go into the next world, good men ſhall be certainly happy, and the wicked miſerable; for that is to beg the thing in queſtion, and to take that for granted which is to be proved; but if we live in the next world, it is certain we muſt be happy or miſerable there, for every thing that lives is ſo in proportion to the Capacities of its Nature.

2. That our State and Condition in the next world muſt have relation to our Behaviour and Deſerts in this: When God firſt makes man, he puts him into ſuch a ſtate as is fitted to his Nature; for when he has done neither Good nor Evil, it is not what he deſerves, but what God ſees him fit for, that muſt allot him his rank and ſtation; but when man is removed out of one ſtate of life into another, his Behaviour in the firſt ſtate muſt be

be taken into conſideration, when God allots him a ſecond; for though his ſtate of life is changed, the Perſon is the ſame, and his Deſerts are the ſame; and if he deſerved ill in this world, he cannot deſerve well in the next; and if he deſerved well in this world, he ought to be well uſed in the next.

Some Philoſophers who believed that the Souls of men did pre-exiſt in a former ſtate, before they came into theſe Bodies, thought this a very good account of the different Fortunes of mens Birth, Education, Condition, and Circumſtances of Life, that they were proportioned to their Merits and Deſerts in that former ſtate: And were this true, that the Souls of men did live in a former ſtate before they came into theſe Bodies, this might be a very fair and reaſonable account of it; for when men have deſerved well or ill, whether they are continued in the ſame ſtate, or tranſlated into ſome other, the Juſtice of the Divine Providence in allotting their State and Condition of Life, muſt have reſpect to their former Deſerts; before Creatures have deſerved well or ill, their Condition muſt be allotted by the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, with reſpect to the capacities of their Natures; when they have deſerved well or ill, their Condition muſt be allotted by Juſtice with reſpect to their Deſerts: This is ſo plain, that it will admit of no Diſpute.

III. And then it neceſſarily follows, that God muſt judge mankind in the next world, muſt reward or puniſh men according to their works; that is, muſt put them into ſuch a ſtate of Happineſs or Miſery as they have deſerved, and have

have made themſelves fit for: Thoſe who have obeyed God, and purified and refined their Natures by the Habits of Grace and Virtue, are fit Objects of his Goodneſs, and have made themſelves capable of a Divine Happineſs, of ſeeing God, and dwelling in his preſence; but thoſe who have debaſed their Natures with the love of this world, and have defiled their Souls with impure Luſts, deſerve to be baniſhed from God's Preſence, as Rebels and Apoſtate Creatures; and having made themſelves uncapable of Divine Joys, muſt ſuffer the Miſeries of damned Spirits: So that if we will but allow that God allots men their Condition in the next world, as he does in this, and that in allotting their Condition in the next world, he has any regard to their Behaviour and Deſerts in this, as Wiſdom and Juſtice requires he ſhould, and this proves a Future Judgment, or that God will reward and puniſh men according to their works. And this may ſuffice for the firſt thing propoſed, What Natural Evidence we have of a Judgment to come.

SECT. V.

The Scripture Proof of a Future Judgment.

II. HAving ſhewn what Evidence we have from the Light of Nature for a Future Judgment, let us now conſider the Scripture Proofs of it: And this might be diſpatched in a very few words, by turning you to ſome plain Texts of Scripture which expreſly aſſert it; but I ſhall do ſomething more than this, which if it be not neceſſary for the Proof of a Future Judgment, yet will

will be of use for the better understanding the Christian Religion, and to rivet this Belief faster in our minds; that is, I shall represent to you those Parabolical Reasonings whereby our Saviour insinuates this belief into our minds; and shew you that the whole Christian Religion is founded on and adapted to the belief of a Future Judgment, and is a very unintelligible Institution without it:

1. Let us consider those plain and express Proofs the Gospel of our Saviour contains of a Future Judgment; and some few Texts will be sufficient for this purpose: This is expressly affirmed by St. *Paul*, 17. Acts 31. *That God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.* The Apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us, *It is appointed for men once to dye, and after that the Judgment*, 9. Heb. 27. Our Saviour tells us that we shall be judged, 7. Matth. 1, 2. *Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured unto you again.* And *v.* 22, 23. he tells us, That *in that day* (that is, the Day of Judgment) *many will say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Thus he tells us, 16. Matth. 27. *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.* And 25. Matth. 31, *&c.* he gives a lively Description of the Future Judgment *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy*

holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory: And before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats; and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And then he judges them, and pronounces their Final Doom and Sentence according to their works, as it follows in that place. It were eaſy to turn you to many Texts to this purpoſe, as every one knows, who is acquainted with the Scripture; but there is no need of it; theſe few are ſo expreſs, that if we believe the Goſpel, we muſt believe that we ſhall be judged.

2. Our Saviour does not only expreſly declare this, that there ſhall be a Judgment, but inſinuates the Belief and Reaſonableneſs of this by ſome proper Alluſions and Comparifons; which is the true Scope and deſign of many of his Parables.

As to inſtance in ſome of them; 19. *Luke* 12, *&c.* he tells us of *a certain nobleman who went into a far countrey, to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return*; where he deſcribes his own leaving this World, and aſcending into Heaven to take poſſeſſion of his Kingdom; from whence he ſhall return again at the Laſt Day to judge the world: This Nobleman *called his ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us.* This deſcribes our ſtate in this world, which is a ſtate of Labour and Induſtry, where we muſt improve our Maſter's Money, all the Advantages and Opportunities of doing good, to his Service and Glory. Now as it is reaſonable to expect, when ſuch a King returns, that

that he will call his Servants to an account, reward the Diligent, and puniſh the Slothful, and deſtroy his Enemies; the ſame Uſage we muſt expect from our Lord, when he returns again; he will judge us, will reward or puniſh us according to our works. To the ſame purpoſe is that Parable, 25. *Matth.* 14, *&c.* of a Man travelling into a far Countrey, who called his Servants, and delivered to them his Goods, and at his return rewarded them proportionably to the increaſe and improvement they had made, and puniſhed that wicked Servant who hid his Talent in a Napkin. The Parable of the Unjuſt Steward, who had waſted his Maſter's Goods, and was turned out of his Stewardſhip for it, is founded on the ſame reaſon, That we are but Stewards of God's Gifts in this world, and that God will as certainly call us to an account for our Stewardſhip, as an earthly Maſter will, 16. *Luke* 1. The Parable of the Houſholder, who hired Labourers into his Vineyard, and gave them every man his Penny at night, 20. *Matth.* ſignifies to us, That in this Life we muſt work in God's Vineyard, and finiſh the Work he has given us to do, and that at Evening, when this Life ends, God will reward us in the next; and this we may as certainly and reaſonably expect from God, as an hired Labourer expects his Wages when he has done his Work.

The Parable of the King, 22. *Matth.* who made a Marriage for his Son, and ſent forth his Servants to call them who were bidden to the Wedding, but they refuſed to come, and evil intreated his Servants, and ſlew them, upon which the King

was

was wroth, and ſent forth his Armies, and deſtroyed thoſe Murderers, and burnt up their City, and ſent and invited others to the Marriage; tho it primarily refer to the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Nation, for their rejecting their Meſſias, and calling the *Gentiles* into the Church, yet is founded on the ſame reaſon, that God will puniſh our abuſe of his Grace, and all the Invitations of the Goſpel, as a gracious, but affronted Prince would puniſh his Subjects in ſuch a caſe.

But the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, 13. *Matth.* 24, *&c.* is very obſervable, becauſe it gives an account why God does not deſtroy all bad men in this world, and yet that he will puniſh the wicked, and reward the good, in the next world: *A man ſoweth good ſeed in the field, and while men ſlept, his enemy came and ſowed tares; but when the blade ſprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares alſo.* This our Saviour expounds, *V.* 37, &c. *He that ſoweth good ſeed is the ſon of man; the field is the world; the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom,* (that is, good Chriſtians) *but the tares are the children of the wicked one;* (that is, bad men.) *The enemy that ſowed them is the* Devil, (as our Saviour tells ſuch men, *Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do.*) The Servants of the Houſholder having informed their Maſter of what had happened, ask him, Whether they ſhould go and gather up the Tares? *But he ſaid, Nay, leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them: Let them both grow together till the harveſt; and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but*

gather the wheat into my barn. Which he thus expounds: *The harveſt is the end of the world*; *and the reapers are the angels*; (for ſo our Saviour tells us, he muſt come *in the glory of his Father, with his angels,* who are the Miniſters and Executioners of his Juſtice). *As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in the end of the world: The ſon of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth like the ſun in the kingdom of their Father.* This we muſt confeſs was wiſely conſidered by the Houſholder, not to deſtroy the Wheat with the Tares, but rather ſuffer them both to grow up together till the Harveſt, than to pluck up the Wheat before it be ripe, together with the Tares; and this is as good a reaſon why God does not deſtroy all bad men in this world, becauſe good and bad men are intermixt, and all bad men cannot be deſtroyed here, but good men muſt ſuffer with them, as I have already ſhewed you at large: And therefore bad men cannot be finally puniſhed, nor good men finally rewarded, till they are firſt parted; for to root up the Tares here, ſignifies the final Extirpation and Deſtruction of all bad men, not the caſting bad men out of the Communion of the Church, nay, not putting Hereticks to Death, to which ſome apply theſe words; which were it reconcileable with the other Laws, and with the Genius and Spirit of Chriſtianity, as it is not, would be as reconcilable with this Parable, as the Execution of any other Malefactors is; this may be

be done without deſtroying the Wheat, nay, in ſome caſes the Wheat may be preſerved by it; for the Puniſhment and Execution of ſome bad men is neceſſary to preſerve the Innocent: but when the Tares are more than the Wheat, grow cloſe together, and are entangled in each other, as the intereſts of good and bad men are intermixt and interwoven in this world, there is great reaſon to ſpare the Tares for the ſake of the Wheat.

But the Tares muſt not expect to eſcape thus always; a wiſe Houſholder in the time of Harveſt will order the Reapers to ſeparate between the Tares and the Wheat, and then the Tares ſhall be burnt, and the Wheat gathered into the Barn; and thus Chriſt will ſeparate between good and bad men at the Laſt Judgment, and allot them very different Portions: All this is very reaſonable; thus a Wiſe Man will do, and therefore this we muſt expect from the Wiſe and Juſt Judge of the world.

This Parable of the Wheat and Tares which grow together in the ſame Field, repreſents the Mixture of Believers and Infidels, the Chriſtian Church, and the men of this World here: But the following Parable of the Net, *v.* 47. *which was caſt into the Sea, and gathered of every kind*, repreſents the mixture of good and bad men in the Communion of the Chriſtian Church; for thus our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, that he would make them *Fiſhers of men*; and gave them a Figure of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry, in that miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, after they had toiled all the Night, and had taken nothing, 5. *Luke* 5, 6. which he repeated again after his Reſurrection

from the Dead, 21. *John* 6, *&c.* So that the Net ſignifies the Communion of the Chriſtian Church, which gathers both good and bad; but when this *Net is drawn to ſhore, they gather the good into Veſſels, but caſt the bad away*; that is, at the end of the World, the Angels ſhall not only ſeparate between the Church and the World, between Believers and Infidels, but between good and bad Chriſtians who live together in the ſame Communion in this World: *The angels ſhall come forth and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.*

Thus we ſee in theſe Parables our Saviour does not only prove that God will judge the World, but convinces us of the Neceſſity and Reaſonableneſs of this, by appealing to the common Rules of Prudence and Juſtice among men: Thus all wiſe and juſt Princes and Houſholders will do, deſtroy Traytors and Rebels, revenge the abuſe of their Favours, call their Stewards to an account, reward the Labour and Improvements of faithful Servants, and puniſh the ſlothful and unprofitable, ſeparate the Wheat and Tares at Harveſt, tho they grow up together in the ſame Field, and ſeparate between the good and bad Fiſh, tho caught in the ſame Net; and therefore thus God will do, who is not leſs Wiſe, and Juſt, and Holy, than Men are. And this gives Authority to all the Arguments for a Future Judgment, drawn from the Reaſon and Nature of Things: Thus our Saviour reaſons, and thus he has taught us to reaſon; for the fundamental Principle on which all theſe Parables reſt, is this, That whatever is manifeſtly juſt, and wiſe, and reaſonable

for

for Men to do, that God will do. If this be not true, the Parables of our Saviour have his Authority, but have no Reaſon, tho the nature of ſuch Parables is an Appeal to the Reaſon of Mankind; and if this be true, then we may argue thus in other caſes, which are equally plain and obvious, and are founded upon the ſame Reaſon; which gives a kind of Divine Authority to the plain and neceſſary Dictates of Reaſon in this matter; and then I'm ſure I have furniſh'd you with Reaſons enough already for the Belief of a Future Judgment.

3. The whole Chriſtian Religion is founded on, and adapted to the Belief of a Future Judgment, and is a very unintelligible Inſtitution without it: And therefore this muſt be a firſt Principle to all who call themſelves Chriſtians, if they underſtand the Religion they profeſs: As to ſhew this particularly:

1. The chief Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel relate to the other World; *Godlineſs*, indeed, *hath the promiſe of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come*; but the Temporal Promiſes made to a holy and virtuous Life, are ſuch as worldly-minded men cannot much value; they extend no farther than Food and Raiment, *to our daily Bread*, which is all our Saviour has taught us to pray for; and therefore it teaches us, *Having food and raiment, therewith to be content*: But who could be contented with ſuch a ſcanty Proviſion, while he ſees the greater Proſperity of bad men, who diſſolve in Eaſe and Luxury, were there not a happy ſtate reſerved for them in the next World? Where is the man who would not comply with the Devil's Temptation to fall 1 Tim. 6. 8.

down and worſhip him for all the Kingdoms of the world, and the Glory of them, were he not to loſe a brighter and a richer Crown for it? Sometimes indeed God does bleſs good men with great Plenty and Honour, but he has no where promiſed to do ſo in the Goſpel of Chriſt; ſometimes he does it not ſo much to reward good men, (for Temporal things are not the proper Rewards of Piety and Virtue) as to ſerve the ends of his Providence in the world: He takes care of good men to ſupply their wants and neceſſities here, which is all that a perfect Virtue requires, but he rewards them hereafter: And yet this is not abſolutely promiſed neither, for our Saviour teaches us to take up his Croſs, to expect Sufferings and Perſecutions for his Name ſake; and then we muſt be contented to want Food and Raiment, to part with Houſes and Lands, and Life it ſelf, for his ſake; and our condition may be ſo afflicted and calamitous here, that it may force us to ſay, as St. *Paul* does, *If in this life only we had hope, we were of all men the moſt miſerable:* And who would be the Diſciple of Chriſt upon theſe terms? To ſuffer ſo much for him in this world, and to gain nothing by it in the next.

Thus on the other hand, there is a terrible Vengeance threatned againſt wicked men in the next world, *Lakes of fire and brimſtone, blackneſs of darkneſs, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never goeth out*; but the Goſpel threatens no Temporal Puniſhments againſt Sin: Bad men are very often puniſhed in this world, when the Wiſdom of the Divine Providence ſees fit, and they very often eſcape too, and are much more proſperous than good men are here; that

that there is no Threatning in the Goſpel to reſtrain the Impieties of men, but only the Fears of the other World, and a Future Judgment; and if you take away theſe, you deſtroy the Goſpel of our Saviour.

2. Many of our Saviour's Laws are founded on the ſuppoſition of a Future Judgment, and are extremely unreaſonable, if there be no Rewards or Puniſhments after this Life; that if we will but allow him the ordinary Prudence of a Lawgiver, a Future Judgment muſt be the Foundation of his Religion.

If there were no other Life after this, the only Rules of our Actions would be to live as long, and to enjoy as much of this world as we can. But Chriſtian Religion in many caſes will not allow of this, and therefore is no Religion for this World, were there not another World to follow.

To begin with the Enjoyments of this world: How many Reſtraints does the Chriſtian Religion lay on us, to leſſen the Pleaſures and Satisfactions of this Life? It teaches us a great Indifferency to all the things of this world; but how unreaſonable is that, if this world be our only place of Happineſs? For who can be indifferent whether he be happy or not? It commands us to mortify our ſenſual Appetites, to crucify the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts, to live above the Pleaſures of the Body, to pluck out our right Eyes, and to cut off our right Hands; but what reaſon can there be to deny our ſelves any of theſe Enjoyments, as far as is conſiſtent with preſerving our Health, and prolonging our Lives, if we have no expectations after Death? Nay, if men

are contented to live a short and a merry Life, what hurt is there in it, if Death puts an end to them? It forbids us to lay up for our selves Treasures on Earth, which were a strange Command, were there not greater Treasures to be expected in Heaven: It forbids earthly Pride and Ambition, an affectation of Secular Honours and Power; but why must we submit to Meanness and Contempt in this world, if this be the only Scene of Action we shall ever be concerned in? for a mean and base Spirit is no Virtue; and for the same reason it can be no Virtue to be contented with a low Fortune, to be patient under Sufferings, which if they will never be rewarded, is to be patiently miserable, and that is Stupidity and Folly; but to have our Conversation in Heaven, to live upon the hopes of unseen things, is Madness and Distraction, if there be no Heaven, no unseen Things for us.

The Laws of our Saviour require us in some cases to sacrifice the dearest Interests we have in this world, and Life it self, for his sake, which is a senseless and unreasonable Command, if he does not intend to bestow a better Life on us: If there were no other Life after this, no wise man would forfeit more for any Religion, than it is worth in this world, and that would reach but a Little way in Sufferings: Nor is our Saviour so unreasonable as to require it upon these Terms; but tells us plainly, *Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* 16. Mat. 25, 26. The Reasons of most of the Evangelical Commands

mands muſt be fetched wholly from the other world, and a Future Judgment; and therefore we ſhould have had the ſame Evidence for a Judgment to come, that we have for the Chriſtian Religion, tho there had been no ſuch expreſs mention made of a Future Judgment.

I cannot but obſerve here the true Reaſon of the Corruption of Chriſtian Morals, which are as much corrupted as the Chriſtian Faith is: That in expounding the Laws of our Saviour, ſome men have no other regard, but to fit them to the eaſe and the conveniences of this Life; and therefore reject any Interpretation of them, which is ſevere to Fleſh and Blood, or will hazard their Eaſe and Fortunes in this world. It is ſufficient to Confute any Law of our Saviour, or to Interpret it away, to ſhew that there are great Temporal Inconveniences in it; that to obſerve ſuch Laws in ſuch a ſenſe would be very injurious to mens preſent intereſts, and deprive them of many Pleaſures and Advantages of Life.

It were eaſy to give many Inſtances of this, but it ſhall ſuffice at preſent to confeſs, that conſidering the ſtate of this world, and the Propenſities and Inclinations of Human Nature, ſome Laws of our Saviour are very unreaſonable, were there not a Future Judgment to reward the Severities and Sufferings which good men muſt undergo in obſerving of them: and therefore we muſt have a care of rejecting any plain and expreſs Law of our Saviour, for any Temporal Inconvenience which attends it, or to think *that* the beſt ſenſe of the Chriſtian Law, which is moſt for the Eaſe and Comfort of this Life.

This

This may serve for the Proof of a Future Judgment, for if this will not prove it, nothing will. There are indeed another sort of Arguments to prove it, but they principally relate to the Person of our Judge, or who shall be our Judge, *viz.* The Son of Man, Christ Jesus, who is God Incarnate, and to which St. *Paul* refers, 17. Acts 31. *That God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*; but I shall defer that, till I come to speak of the Person of our Judge.

SECT. VI.

The Improvement of this Doctrine in some Practical Inferences, as, 1, To live as it becomes those who shall certainly be judged. 2. To keep our Eye upon a Future Judgment for the Government of our Lives.

HAving thus proved the Certainty of a Future Judgment, both from Reason and Scripture, before I proceed, it is necessary to consider, how we must improve this Belief for the government of our Lives; for that is the only end of Faith and Knowledge; and if we be never the better men for our Faith, we may as well be Infidels; and this I shall do in these following Particulars:

I. To live as it becomes those who shall certainly be judged. I suppose I need not prove this Consequence, That those who must be judged, ought to live as those who must be judged; for if

if Judgment be of any concernment to us, I am ſure it is of great concernment to prepare our ſelves for Judgment: And if we muſt be judged for Eternity, Judgment is of as great concernment to us, as Eternal Life and Death. Nor is there any great difficulty to know, how thoſe men ought to live, who muſt be judged; every man knows this without a Teacher, who will give himſelf leave to think: A Steward, a Factor, a Labourer, any perſon who is liable to the Cenſure and Judgment of a Superior, who will call him to an Account, knows what he is to do, to prepare his Accounts; and there is no greater Myſtery in preparing ourſelves for God's Judgment, than for the Judgment of Men. But becauſe all men will not conſider things as they ought, tho they be never ſo plain and obvious, I ſhall briefly ſuggeſt ſome Rules to you, which you muſt all acknowledge very reaſonable at the firſt hearing, and which if well obſerved, would make us lift up our Heads in the Day of Judgment, and expect it without Aſtoniſhment and Terror:

1. If we muſt be judged, it becomes us to act with great Conſideration and Advice: Raſhneſs, Precipitancy, Inadvertency, to do we know not what, in a Heat and Impetus, without conſidering whether it be good or evil, right or wrong, does not become thoſe who muſt be judged. To be judged is to be called to an account, to give a reaſon for what we do, and therefore we ought to conſider what reaſon to give, before we do it. We muſt be judged by a Rule, as you ſhall hear more hereafter; and therefore we ought to live by Rule too, which no man can do, who does not conſider well, what he

he does, before he does it: it will be an ill Plea at the Day of Judgment to say, that we did not consider what we did; that we lived without Care, without Thought, without Observation; for this is not an allowable Plea for a reasonable Creature, much less for one who knows he must be judged: For why did you live without Thought, without Consideration? had you not the Power of Thinking, of Reasoning, of Considering? and did not God give these Powers and Faculties to you, to direct and govern your lives? did he not make you reasonable Creatures, that you might consider, and live by Reason? and is it an Excuse then for a reasonable Creature, that he lived and acted without Reason, and a wise Consideration of things? This is the great Degeneracy of Human Nature, the abuse and corruption of those Natural Powers which God hath given us, the Source of all the evils that are in this world, and therefore can be no Excuse, much less, when we know that God will judge us, and require a reason of our Actions: for not to consider our own ways, when we know God considers them, and will require an account of them, is a contempt of his Judgment; for did we reverence our Judge, we must consider: and yet how many mad, extravagant, wicked Actions are there daily committed, which those who do them, never think why they do them, nor what reasonable account they can give of them either to God or Man.

Some men are very fond of what they call a Frolick; that is, to lay aside all Thought and Consideration, and to give themselves up to the government of every sudden and unaccountable Fancy,

Fancy, and the more wild and extravagant it is, the more entertaining, without any regard to Vertue or Vice, to decency and Honour, the leaſt thought of which is a Prophanation of theſe *Bedlam* Myſteries: they drink themſelves drunk in a Frolick, blaſpheme GOD, and his Son JESUS CHRIST, and his moſt holy Religion, abuſe Wives and Virgins, murder innocent People, and affront all they meet, in a Frolick: but it is ridiculous to imagine, if we muſt be judged, that ſuch Frolicks as theſe ſhall be allowed in the Account, or paſs for Cyphers and empty Scenes of Life, to ſignifie no more than they were intended for; that becauſe we chooſe at ſuch a time to act without Reaſon and Conſideration, therefore GOD ſhould demand no Reaſon nor Account of ſuch Actions.

And yet a very great part of the World, tho' they do not run into ſuch outragious Frolicks as theſe are, yet their Lives are little better than a train of incoherent and independent Fancies and Humours; they live without Thought, or any wiſe deſign, any extempore Project has them, which ſtarts up in their minds, or ſtrikes their Fancies: they ſcarce know what they have to do the next day, nor how they ſpent the laſt: But is this a Life for men who are to be judged?

Others there are who give themſelves up to the government of their Paſſions, which are ſo vehement and impetuous, and always in ſo much haſt, that they will neither hear Reaſon, nor allow any time for it; and then no wonder if they do ſuch things as they can give no good account of, when their Paſſion is over.

Others

Others are more fixt and resolved in their way; they have chose such a course of Life as they like best, and they are resolved to pursue it, and that nothing shall put them out of it; and therefore they resolve against thinking too, lest that should disturb them, and give check to their Enjoyments: they will neither listen to their own Consciences, nor hearken to the Importunities of their Friends, nor be perswaded to consider, what the probable end of all their Actions will be, both in this world, and in the next.

These are all unthinking unconsidering Sinners; but you will all confess, that these men do not live as if they were to be judged; and therefore if we believe that we shall be judged, none of us ought to live thus: we ought to consider well beforehand, what we do, that we may be able to give a reasonable account of it, when we have done it; for if we must give a reason of our Actions, when we have done them, we ought to know a reason for them, before we do them; and therefore we must accustom our minds to a grave and serious consideration of things, to live by Reason, not by Humour and Fancy, not by the Impetus and Fury of Passion which is a very ill Counsellor; much less to pursue our Lusts with an affected and resolved Ignorance and Blindness; for all this will not prevent our being judged, but will make us very unable to give a good account of our selves when we are.

2. As we must act with great Consideration, so we must make it the standing Principle and Rule of our Lives, never to do any thing, but what we can give a good account of; either what we know is our Duty, or at least what we are satisfied is very

very lawful and innocent to be done; for if we do those things which we cannot account for, for which our own minds condemn us, how can we appear with any hope and confidence at the Tribunal of God? When men transgress a known Duty, they are Self-condemned, and God need not judge them, but only execute the Sentence and Judgment of their own Conscience. To believe that God will judge us, and yet to venture upon such Actions, for which our own Consciences condemn us, and for which we know God will as certainly condemn us as our own Consciences do, is folly and distraction: since we must be judged, our great care and concernment should be, that when we are judged, we may not be condemned; and the most effectual way to prevent this, is to do nothing which our Conscience condemns: It is possible indeed, that men who sin wilfully against a known Duty, may recover themselves by Repentance, and obtain Mercy through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ; but it does not become any man, who believes a Judgment, *to sin, that grace may abound*; these hopes very often deceive men, and will always do so, till they come to this Resolution, never to violate a known Duty, to provoke the Justice, or to exercise the Patience and Forbearance of GOD. There is no other way to escape the Condemnation of the last Judgment, but by a resolved Obedience to the Divine Laws; and therefore if we believe we shall be judged, nothing can be more necessary, nor more becoming, than to make this the constant Rule of our Actions, never to do any thing for which we know God will condemn us, nothing but what we

we can account for, and then we ſhall be prepared for Judgment, whenever it comes.

3. It becomes thoſe who muſt be judged, to judge themſelves, and to take a frequent and impartial account of their own Lives and Actions. This is no more than every Steward does, who caſts up his Books, and adjuſts his accounts himſelf, before he preſents them to his Lord. The truth is, it is impoſſible for any man, who knows he ſhall be judged, not to be very ſolicitous to know, what his Judgment ſhall be; and this every man may in a great meaſure know, who impartially examines his own Conſcience; for ſo St. *John* tells us, *If our heart*, or Conſcience, *condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things: but if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards* GOD, 1 John 3. 20, 21. So that if our Lives have been innocent and vertuous, and ſuch as a well-inform'd Conſcience approves, this will give infinite Peace and Satisfaction to us, and fill us with Divine Joys, with a Plerophory of Hope and Aſſurance; but if we ſhould not find things ſo well, though upon ſuch a ſtrict Examination our Conſciences ſhould be very quarrelſome and uneaſy, and threaten the Vengeance of God againſt us, yet it is much more deſirable to hear our Conſciences chide and condemn us, than to hear our final Sentence from the mouth of our Judge, *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*: The Judgment of Conſcience is not final; for Conſcience is rather our Monitor than our Judge; it tells us what will be, if we do not take care to prevent it, not what certainly is, and ſhall be; and

and therefore we have this advantage by the Rebukes and Cenſures of Conſcience, to know what is amiſs, and what we muſt correct and amend.

Nay, a frequent Examination of our ſelves would keep a perpetual Watch and Guard upon our Lives: After our greateſt care and caution, a great many things will be haſtily done, and ſaid, which we cannot reconcile with the Rules of Prudence, and Decency, and ſtrict Virtue; but he who frequently calls himſelf to an account, and obſerves all theſe Defects, which it may be other men are never ſenſible of, will attain an habitual Caution and Watchfulneſs, and improve into great Exactneſs of Converſation, and all the Graces and Beauties of Virtue: Some of the Philoſophers thought it a very good Rule to call themſelves to an account every night, for what they had done that day; which would make us reverence our ſelves and our own Conſciences; but there is much more reaſon to do ſo, when we remember that God obſerves all our Actions, and will judge us for them: The Judgment of our Conſciences, as I obſerved to you before, is a Natural Preſage of God's Judgment; for there is no other reaſon why our Conſciences ſhould judge us, but that God will; and then the reaſon is very ſtrong alſo, that if God will judge us, we ought to judge our ſelves; for this is the proper Office and Miniſtry of Conſcience in ſubordination to the Judgment of God.

II. Let us keep our Eye perpetually on a Future Judgment, for the direction and government of our Lives; for this will furniſh us with ſuch

Principles of Action, as cannot be so well learnt any other way.

1. As first, it teaches us above all things to take care to approve our selves to God, which is the only Principle of true Religion, and universal Obedience: Nothing is an Act of Religion, but as it respects God, and is referred wholly to him; to perform all the Acts of Worship, though with never so great Pomp and Ceremony, and external Appearances of Devotion; to do never so many good Actions, to be seen and to be praised by men, or to serve some Secular Interest by it, is not Religion: But such men, if they meet with what they expected, have their Reward, all that they deserve, and all that they proposed to themselves: Their Religion is a Courtship to Men, not the Worship of God. And this Principle will reach but a little way, only to some external and popular Acts, and is calculated only for the prosperous Times of Religion, when it is in Fashion and Reputation, and will give men Credit, and raise their Fortunes in the World. But those who are Religious, and do good for God's sake, to approve themselves to him, have a steady and universal Principle of Righteousness, which is as certain and immutable as God is; and if God will certainly judge us, if we must receive our final Doom and Sentence from his mouth, I know not whom we are concerned to please, but him; I am sure none in opposition to him. As for instance; the Censures of the World are a great Temptation to most men; when instead of Praise and Honour, an unfashionable Virtue meets with Infamy, and Reproach, and Publick Scorn: But St. *Paul's* answer

anſwer will fit all ſuch caſes; *It is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful; but with me it is a very ſmall thing, that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment;* —— *he that judgeth me is the Lord,* 1 Cor. 4. 2, 3, 4. While we can approve our ſelves to God, that *in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have our converſation in this world,* the different judgments of men ought to be deſpiſed: Whatever Sentence they pronounce, can have no effect, for they are not our Judges, but muſt be judged themſelves: And if we can appeal to God, who is our Judge, all the reſt is but Pageantry and Childrens Sport, a Ludicrous Imitation of Judgment, which ſometimes ends comically enough, when their Parents or Maſters happen to ſee them; the Judge and Jury are whipt, and the condemned Innocent eſcapes: But what will it avail us, when we come before God's Tribunal, that we have been not only abſolved, but praiſed, admired, applauded by men, who are incompetent, ignorant, or partial Judges.

So that if God be our Judge, we have nothing elſe to do, but to approve our ſelves to him; we have but one Maſter to pleaſe, and he more eaſily pleaſed too, than men commonly are, who are never all of a mind, and therefore can never all be pleaſed; and ſeldom continue long of the ſame mind, and therefore cannot always be pleaſed: Our Saviour himſelf experienced this Inconſtancy, when the loudeſt Hoſannahs in three or four days time were changed into *Crucify him.*

So little regard is there to be had to the good or bad opinion of men; no wiſe man will be contented to ſtand or fall by it; and whoever makes this the Principle of his Actions, can never

be a good man long: But he who approves himself to GOD, will like Religion never the worse for being reproached; will be contented with the private Applause of his own Conscience, to shelter him against the most outragious Obloquies; will take as great care of the frame and disposition of his Mind, as of his outward Actions, because tho men cannot see his heart, God does; will be as devout in his Closet as at Church; will fast without any external show and appearance of Fasting, and give Alms without the sound of a Trumpet, with such secrecy, as if it were possible to conceal it from himself, that *his left hand shall not know what his right hand does*; for he is not concerned that men should know any thing of this, and nothing is so secret but God knows it, and *his father which seeth in secret, shall reward him openly*, 6. Mat. 1, *&c.*

2. As we must approve our selves to God who is our Judge, so we must fetch the Reasons and Motives of Obedience from a Future Judgment, from those Rewards God has promised to bestow at that day on good men, and those Punishments he will inflict upon the wicked: These, as far as concerns Rewards and Punishments, are the only Gospel Motives of Obedience; I say, as far as concerns Rewards and Punishments, because there are other Gospel-Motives of Obedience, besides Rewards and Punishments; such as the great Love of God in giving his Son for us, the great Love of Christ in giving himself a Sacrifice for us, which is a powerful Obligation on us *to live to him who died for us:* and the powerful Assistances of the Holy Spirit to work in us both to will and

to

to do, which renders our Obedience poſſible and eaſy; but the Motives of Obedience from the Rewards of Virtue, and Puniſhment of Wickedneſs, muſt be fetch'd from a Future Judgment; for theſe unſeen and abſent Rewards and Puniſhments are the only Object of Faith, which *is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen,* 11. Heb. 1. And Faith is the only true Principle of Goſpel-Obedience: Preſent Rewards and Puniſhments were the Motives of the *Moſaical* Covenant, and this is a legal Spirit to ſerve God in expectation of a preſent Reward, or for fear of ſome Temporal Puniſhment; but future Rewards and Puniſhments are the Motives of the Goſpel, the Exerciſe of Faith, and the true Spirit of Sons, the not obſerving which was the occaſion of that fooliſh miſtake, that to ſerve God for a Reward, is a legal and ſervile Spirit; which is true, if we ſpeak of preſent and Temporal Rewards, but not of thoſe which are Spiritual and Eternal. And if we will be true and ſincere Chriſtians, here we muſt fix our eye, and with *Moſes* have reſpect to a Future Recompence of Reward; for no other Motives will fit all Times, nor conquer all Temptations, nor extend to all Acts of Religion.

Thoſe who ſerve God for a preſent Reward, to make their Fortunes in this World, muſt quit his Service when Religion expoſes them to Sufferings and Perſecutions, and to the loſs of all things for Chriſt's ſake: Thoſe who abſtain from Sin for fear of ſome Temporal Puniſhments, muſt commit ſuch Sins, when they ſhall ſuffer more by not committing them: When men ſerve God for Temporal Hopes or

Fears, whenever the world promises greater Prosperity, or threatens more terrible things, they must necessarily change their Master, for they must take that side on which the present Advantage lies.

Good men sometimes meet with a Reward in this world; Virtue may in some Junctures make men Rich and Honourable; but whoever courts Virtue for Riches and Honours, will never court a poor and despised Virtue; that is, he does not indeed court Virtue, but Riches and Honours; and will rather take as much Virtue with them as is necessary to that purpose, than go without them; but Riches and Honours, with or without Virtue, are always welcome: Whoever makes the Advantages of this Life his Reasons and Motives to Virtue, will do no more good than will advance his present Interest, and will be good no longer; and this is a very sorry Virtue, it had need have some Reward in this world, for it will have none in the next.

Those Temporal Promises which are contained in the Gospel, were never intended by our Saviour as the Rewards or Motives of our Obedience, but only to encourage and support us in our Pilgrimage in this world, that if *we seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*, if we give up our selves to the Obedience of the Gospel, and live upon the Hopes of unseen things, and lay up Treasures in Heaven, *all other things shall be added unto us*; God will provide what is needful for our passage through this world, whatever Difficulties and Discouragements we may meet with from men.

The

The deſign of the Goſpel is to take our Hearts from this world, to teach us not to lay up for our ſelves Treaſures on Earth, but in Heaven; not to love this world, nor the things that are in the world; and therefore it is impoſſible that Temporal Bleſſings ſhould be a Goſpel Motive; nothing in this world can be a Motive, unleſs we love the world, and therefore this can be no Motive of the Chriſtian Religion, which teaches us not to love the world; unleſs the love of the world can be a proper Motive and Argument to make us deſpiſe it, and live above it.

And therefore I confeſs I have ſometimes wiſhed that there had been leſs ſtreſs laid upon the Temporal Rewards and Advantages of Virtue, to perſuade men to Religion; and upon the Temporal Evils and Miſeries of Sin, to diſcourage men from it; for this is not always true, and if it were, it is an Argument which will perſuade no man, and if it did, it cannot advance them to the heights and perfections of a Chriſtian Virtue, and therefore is no Goſpel-Motive. As for Inſtance:

Some Virtues are very healthful, prolong our Lives, and prevent a great many painful and mortal Diſeaſes, which the contrary Vices expoſe men to, ſuch as Temperance and Chaſtity; other Virtues are very proper methods of thriving in the world, ſuch as Diligence, Prudence, Juſtice; others give us Reputation and Honour, advance us to Rule, and Empire, and Publick Truſts: Now this is ſometimes true, and ſometimes not, as the State of the world now is, as I ſhewed you before; that whatever natural efficacy Virtue may have to make men happy, or Vice to

make them miserable, this may be in a great measure defeated by the external Circumstances of our Condition in this world; and therefore this can never be a Motive, that is, it cannot be a reason why we should chuse Virtue, because it is not always a reason; nay, it is as often a reason for Vice as for Virtue; and if it be a good reason for one, I cannot see why it should not be a good reason for the other; for if it be a reason at all, it is a reason for that side on which at present it is, whether that be Virtue or Vice: Indeed these Temporal Advantages of Virtue are not so much Reasons for Virtue, as against Vice, and that too only against such Vices or such Degrees and Instances of Vice, as are destructive to mens Health, or Fortunes, or Reputation: However, this reason, be it what it will, will reach no farther than to such a degree of Virtue as will contribute to a happy and prosperous life in this world, and therefore will not raise us above this world, will not teach us to despise Riches and Honours, and Bodily Pleasures, nay, is not consistent with a mean value, and great indifferency to present things, and therefore it cannot make us Christians; and is a very improper Argument to persuade men to be Christians; it never made a Christian yet, and never will do.

And therefore let us not think to conquer the Deceits and Flatteries of the World and the Flesh, with such Arguments as these, which have no strength in them, which are more apt to make men fond of this world, than to conquer it: But *this is our Victory which overcomes the World, even our Faith*; the hope and fear of unseen things, or a Future Judgment, when God

God will eternally reward good men, and puniſh the wicked. This is an Argument in all Times, and in all Conditions; it will make us deſpiſe the world when it ſmiles and flatters, and ſcorn its Frowns: Here are hopes too big for this world, and fears too great and powerful for its fears; ſuch hopes as can ſupport us under the greateſt Sufferings; ſuch fears as can imbitter all the ſweets of Sin; and therefore let us keep the Future Judgment always in our eye; let us fetch our Supports and Comforts from thence; let us oppoſe theſe Hopes and Fears againſt all Temptations, for here is our ſtrength; all other Arguments are eaſily baffled, but nothing can anſwer the Argument of Eternal Life and Death.

SECT. VII.

Third Inference: To refer all Judgment to GOD.

III. IF GOD will certainly Judge the World, let us refer all Judgment to God; or as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. Nothing is more indecent nor more dangerous, than for men who muſt be judged themſelves, to take God's work out of his hands, and to aſſume a Prætorian Power to Judge, Acquit, and Condemn whom they pleaſe, without expecting the Judgment of God: To Judge is God's Prerogative, and he will Judge the world: And *what haſt thou to do to judge another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſhall ſtand*

or

or fall. Why so much haste to prevent the Judgment of God by our rash, ignorant, uncharitable Judgments; Judgment will come time enough for us all, *and therefore judge nothing before the time.*

This is so common a Fault, and does so much Mischief in the world, and yet is so very unreasonable, considering a Future Judgment, that it will be of great use to Discourse it more particularly, and if it be possible, to correct this Miscarriage, which is one of the greatest Plagues of Human Society.

It is very obvious to ask here, What is the fault of this? Is there any living in the world without judging of men and things? Must we not say, that he is a very bad man, whom we see do very bad things? Must we not distinguish between Virtue and Vice, and between good and bad men? Must we not make good men our Friends, commend and imitate their Virtues, and reject the conversation of the wicked, and beware of Knaves, and men of ill Principles and Designs? And is it not necessary then to distinguish between good and bad men? That is, to judge who are so. Must we wholly refer the Punishment of Wickedness, and the Rewards of Virtue to the Day of Judgment, and because God will judge the world, must not Princes and Magistrates execute Justice, and separate between the Pure and the Vile?

This is so very unreasonable, so inconsistent with the wise Conduct and Government of our Lives, and a prudent care of our selves, so destructive to human societies, gives such encouragement to wickedness, and so confounds the distinction

ction of Good and Evil, that I need not tell any man, that this is not meant by referring all Judgment to God: We muſt judge of men and things as far as is neceſſary to the prudent Government of our Lives, and to the preſervation of Peace, and Juſtice, and good Order in the World: this does not intrench upon a Future Judgment, nor upon God's Prerogative of being the ſole Judge of the World, but is neceſſary in this preſent ſtate of Things; ſo neceſſary that neither Publick Societies, nor private Perſons can be ſafe without it. But then we aſſume ſuch a Judgment to ourſelves, as belongs only to God, when we judge mens Hearts, and ſecret Thoughts, and Intentions, and when we paſs Judgment on their final State:

Firſt, When we judge mens Hearts, and Thoughts, and ſecret Intentions: For the Heart of man is known only to himſelf, and to God who is the Searcher of Hearts; and the Counſels of the Heart will never be made manifeſt, till God comes to Judge the World.

Indeed no man will pretend to know another mans Heart; and yet it is too plain in many caſes, that men undertake to judge of Hearts: And the great Fault in judging is, that whether men will own it or no, yet they undertake to judge of Hearts.

Thus all thoſe do, who charge men with more Guilt than is viſible in their Actions; for if we can diſcover any Guilt which is not viſible in their Actions, we muſt look into their Hearts, and Thoughts, and Intentions, to find it.

Thus

Thus those do, who charge men with Guilt upon account of innocent and indifferent Actions, which have no necessary Good or Evil in them, but are as they are taken, and as they were intended: and those who can find any hurt in such Actions, as have no intrinsick Evil and Mischief in them, must find it in the heart.

Especially those, who judge and condemn men for the most virtuous Actions, for the most imitable Examples of Piety, and Devotion, and Charity, and a severe and mortified Life; and call this Affectation, and Popularity, and Pharisaism, and charge them with carrying on some worldly and secular Designs under the Masque and Disguise of Religion. Now I grant this may be done, and sometimes it may be visible enough, as it was in the Pharisees; but to charge any man with this, without some plain and manifest Indication of it, is to judge their Hearts, when we know nothing of them.

Nay, to charge men with the utmost possible Guilt, even of their bad Actions, is to judge their Hearts; for it is to say, that they have done such a wicked Action with all the internal wickedness of Heart and Mind, which such an Action can be committed with; which no man can say without judging the Heart.

The same wicked Action may be the effect either of Ignorance or of Knowledge, of Rashness and Surprise, or of mature and deliberate Counsel, of habitual wickedness, or of some accidental Temptation, of our own free Choice, or the persuasions of Friends, and the Inticements of our Companions, and the Prevalency of Shame or Fear: now this makes a vast difference in the Guilt and Sin, and

and if the ſame Action may have different degrees of Guilt, we muſt charge it with no more than what is viſible, unleſs we will undertake to judge the Secrets of Hearts.

Thus to charge a man with acting againſt his Concience, when he himſelf declares a full ſatisfaction in what he does; or to ſay, that he only pretends Conſcience, when it is nothing but Humour, or Pride, and Popularity, or Intereſt and Politicks, is to judge mens Hearts: for theſe things are not to be known, without knowing mens Hearts. There may be great Symptoms, and ſtrong Preſumptions, that ſome men have no Conſcience at all, or no regard to it; for thoſe who in the general courſe of their Lives govern themſelves by no Rule, are ridiculous when they pretend Conſcience in any thing; but thoſe who in their other Actions ſhew, that they are men of Conſcence, ought to be believed, when they pretend Conſcience, unleſs there be manifeſt Evidence to the contrary.

All theſe things belong to the Judgment of God, who will judge the Secrets of mens Hearts by the Goſpel of Chriſt, but we are not concerned to judge of them; for it ſerves no good end, but does very great miſchief to the World.

All the Ends of Human Government both in Church and State, may be attained without this; for human Governments do not pretend to judge mens Thoughts and Hearts, any otherwiſe than as they are declared in words and actions, and ſome very plain and ſignificant circumſtances, which betray and ſpeak their Intentions and Deſigns: Human Governments take notice only of what appears, and this is ſufficient to ſecure the external Purity

Purity of the Church, and to preserve Justice and good Order in the State; but the mischief of judging mens Thoughts and Hearts, is chiefly seen in private Conversation.

How often does this dissolve the most intimate Friendships, and beget mortal Quarrels, that men read each others Thoughts and Hearts in their Actions, and very often read very false, and directly contrary to the sense of the Original: when an indiscreet Word or Action is interpreted a designed Affront, and a careless or forgetful Neglect is thought a contempt; when an intended Kindness miscarries, and proves an Injury, and is then thought to be intended so. It is easily observed, that meer Actions anger no man, and make no Quarrel; for we can easily bear with that from one whom we believe our Friend, which we will not bear with from a Stranger, or a supposed Enemy or Rival; but when men apprehend a thing ill intended, then they take it ill; that is, they judge mens Hearts and Intentions, which they cannot see, and which they often mistake, and that makes the Quarrel.

Another Mischief of this judging is, that many times the most exemplary Virtue is greatly discouraged, and the most useful men eclipsed, and made unserviceable to the World: when the most conspicuous Piety, and Devotion, and Charity is accused of Pride, Ambition, Popularity, or some other base and low Design, it makes such good men afraid of appearing good to avoid the suspicion of being Vain and Wicked; it makes their Examples useless to the World; for men

men will be afraid to imitate them, when they who ſet the Example get nothing but an ill Name by it: It makes ſome men think that all Religion is a Cheat, and has nothing but this World at the bottom, when the more zealous men appear in doing good, the more they are ſuſpected of Hypocriſy, and worldly Deſigns.

And thus on the other hand, (as we know mankind are very partial in their Affections) when thoſe who do very wicked Actions, ſhall ſtill be thought good men, and maintain their Reputation in the World, as having the root of the matter in them, though they are not without their failings; this makes men believe, that they may be good, and yet live wickedly, if they do but take care of their Hearts; and they can eaſily perſuade themſelves, that their Hearts are very good.

It were eaſy to reckon up a great many miſchiefs of this judging mens Hearts, eſpecially when cenſures fall upon the Miniſters of Religion, which weakens their Authority, and Counſels, and Examples, and Reproofs; which was the caſe of St. *Paul* himſelf, who it ſeems was cenſured on all hands, but appeals from man's Judgment to the Judgment of God, *With me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's Judgment: yea, I judge not my ſelf. For I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of the heart: and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God,* 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 5.

Let

Let us then judge of mens actions according to those Rules of Good and Evil, which the Gospel has given us, but leave their Hearts to God, who alone knows the Secrets of Hearts, and who alone can judge them: this is God's Prerogative, and it is Presumption in us to intermeddle with it, and worse than that, it is very dangerous too, with respect to our own Account at the last Judgment, as our Saviour tells us, 7 Matth. 1, 2. *Judge not, that ye be not judged: For with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured unto you again.* So that if we will judge, we ought to be favourable and charitable in our Judgment, if we desire to be judged favourably by God: And I believe there is none of us but will confess, that we stand in need of a very favourable Judgment; that God should make great Allowances for the Weakness, Ignorance, Folly, Mistakes, Inadvertencies, Surprizes, Temptations of Human Nature; and if we are so far from making any favourable allowances for the Miscarriages of our Brethren, that we search into their very Hearts and Thoughts, to find something to quarrel with; either to aggravate visible Faults; or to turn appearing and visible Virtues into Faults; what may we expect from the Just and Righteous Judge of the World? It is a known Rule of Righteousness, To do as we would be done to; and all Mankind think it very just, to suffer what we do, to receive the same measure we meet to others; and therefore we may make a Law to our selves, and by a severe, rigorous, uncharitable Judgment of men, make God, not an Unjust, but yet a Severe and Rigorous Judge of us;

and

And *if he be ſevere to mark what we have done amiſs, who can ſtand before him?*

2*dly*, As we muſt not judge mens Hearts and Thoughts, much leſs muſt we judge their Final ſtate; to condemn them to eternal Miſeries, or to advance them to eternal Glories, as we pleaſe; for this is to pre-judge the Judgment of God, and to preſcribe to him, whom he ſhall ſave, and whom he ſhall damn, by our own byaſs'd and partial Affections. It becomes us to take care of our own Accounts, and to leave other men to the merciful Judgment of God: It is an argument of a very ill temper of mind, when men are haſty and forward in pronouncing the Sentence of Damnation againſt others; it looks as if they had a mind ſuch men ſhould be damned; as if they would direct God what to do, leſt he ſhould be too merciful: It is enough for us to conſider what the Terms of Salvation are, which the Goſpel has propoſed to us; and to take care to perform theſe Terms our ſelves; whether other men have performed them or not; 'tis none of our buſineſs to judge; that God will do when he comes to judge the World: But all pious and charitable Chriſtians, who conſider what it is to be damned, are very unwilling to pronounce this Sentence upon any man.

Our Church has been extremely blamed by ſome men, for that Charity ſhe has expreſſed in her Office of Burial, towards all that dye in her Communion, when ſhe teaches us to pray, *We meekly beſeech Thee, O Father, to raiſe us from the death of Sin, unto the Life of Righteouſneſs, that when we ſhall depart this*

Life, we may reſt in him, as our hope is this our Brother doth. And yet it may be the Perſon then buried, is known to have lived a very wicked and profligate Life: And how can we expreſs our Hope of the Salvation of ſuch a man?

Now the truth is, our Church never intended this Office of Burial for men of Profligate Lives, no more than ſhe intended that ſuch men ſhould live and dye in her Communion; for this Office is only for thoſe who dye in the Communion of the Church; and were Church-Diſcipline duly exerciſed, all ſuch notorious Sinners muſt have been flung out of Church-Communion: And thoſe who raiſe the Clamour about this, have been one great Hindrance of exerciſing Diſcipline, having weakened the Power and Authority of the Church by their Schiſms and Factions: But taking things as they are, I confeſs I can ſee no Impiety in it, nor any ſuch mighty Fault as is pretended. The Church does not pretend to judge any man's Final State, how wicked ſoever his Life was, that is God's Work, and ſhe leaves them to him; and what great Fault is it to hope well, when we can't pretend to know enough of the worſt of men, eſpecially of the end and concluſion of their Lives, to paſs a Final Sentence on them? There are a great many degrees of Hope, and one degree but the next remove from Deſpair; that is, but the next remove from pronouncing Damnation againſt them; and if we muſt not do that, we may ſay, we hope ſtill: Suppoſe our Hope be no more than a charitable Wiſh, how can that offend God, that we wiſh well even to very bad men? an exceſs of Charity, an Unwillingneſs

that

that any man ſhould be eternally miſerable, is no Fault; I am ſure it is a greater to pronounce the final Sentence of Damnation againſt any man.

But it is ſaid, that this encourages his wicked Companions who attend his Funeral, to hope they may be ſaved too, though they perſiſt in their Wickedneſs to the laſt, as he did; now indeed what little matters may encourage ſuch men in ſin, I cannot ſay, but there is no reaſon that a faint and charitable Wiſh ſhould do this: If they know the Goſpel of Chriſt, they know that He has threatned eternal Damnation againſt all impenitent Sinners; if they know the Doctrine of the Church, they know ſhe teaches the very ſame thing; if they ſaw their wicked Companion dye, they ſaw his dying Horrors and Agonies too, which few of them dye without, if they have any time to conſider their ſtate; and when they know and ſee all this, is there any reaſon to hope they ſhall be ſaved in their Wickedneſs, only becauſe the Church will not damn them, but reſerves them to the Judgment of God, and ſends her charitable Wiſhes after them? At leaſt this can be no Encouragement, when they are forewarned before-hand of it; which is the chief reaſon why I take notice of it at this time.

Upon the ſame Principle, I am not aſhamed to own I have always been averſe to that Diſpute about the Salvation of Heathens; for this is to ſit in Judgment on three parts of the World, and I am not the Judge of the World, nor of any part of it; and yet I know not what Character and Cenſures this plain Confeſ-

ſion may bring upon me; for ſome men do as peremptorily damn all the Heathen World, as if it were an Article of their Creed, and think all thoſe Enemies to the Grace of Chriſt, who do not; but for my part, I dare neither damn nor ſave them, for I know nothing of the matter.

By what Rule God will judge the Heathen world, I cannot tell; St. *Paul* tells us, *As many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law*, 2. Rom. 12. And there is the ſame reaſon as to the Goſpel too, that thoſe who never heard of the Goſpel, ſhall be judged without the Goſpel; and who can tell what this ſignifies? what mighty Allowances God may make for their invincible Ignorances, and the unhappy Circumſtances of their Education? Who can tell how little God will accept from thoſe to whom he has given little? I am ſure our Saviour tells us, *To whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, 12. Luke 48. Which by a parity of reaſon ſuppoſes, that where God has given little, he requires little. St. *Paul* ſeems to intimate a very favourable Judgment which ſuch men ſhall have, and a vaſt difference that God makes between the times of Pagan Ignorance, and the Light of the Goſpel, *The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a day*, &c. 17. Acts 30, 31. where God's winking at the Times of Ignorance, muſt ſignify that he is not ſo ſevere and curious an obſerver of their Actions,

Actions, nor ſo ſtrict to mark what is amiſs, nor ſo rigorous in exacting Puniſhment, as he will be now. They are in the hands of God, and there we ought to leave them, with this general perſuaſion, That God will be very Juſt, and very Merciful in judging them; and this eaſes my mind of a great many troubleſome thoughts. I know not what pleaſure other men take in it, but it is terrible to me, when I conſider what eternal Damnation is, to think that ſo much the greateſt part of the World, who never had the Means and Opportunities of Salvation, as we have, ſhall be eternally damned: I dare judge nothing; but that great love I have for Mankind, inclines me to hope better for them, (as far as the Circumſtances of their Condition will admit of a favourable judgment); and that ſtrong perſuaſion I have of the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God inclines me to believe better of him; for ſo I am apt to think, that the merciful ſide of the queſtion is moſt agreeable to the Divine Juſtice and Goodneſs.

Such another curious Queſtion is that about the Salvation of Infants, who dye before they know good or evil; eſpecially the Children of Heathen Parents: Now it is certain they have no Legal and Covenant Title to Salvation; nor have they any thing of their own to anſwer for, but that Original Guilt they contracted by their Birth: Now God has not told us how he will judge theſe Infants, nor are we concerned to know.

The Infants of Chriſtian Parents indeed have a Covenant Title to Salvation, for the *promiſe is made to us and to our Children*; and to ſay that *ſuch children dying after Baptiſm, before they have*

committed any actual ſin, ſhall certainly be ſaved, is not an Act of Judgment, but only a declaring the Virtue and Efficacy of Baptiſmal Grace and Regeneration; that the Grace of Baptiſm will ſave thoſe who do not afterwards forfeit this Grace by wilful Sins; and therefore if the Children of Chriſtian Parents have a Right to Baptiſm, they have a Right to the Salvation of Baptiſm; and if they dye before they have forfeited this Right by their own Act, they muſt be ſaved: And to deny this, is to deny the Virtue and Efficacy of Baptiſm to Salvation; and that I am ſure is to deny, or to leſſen the Goſpel-Grace.

The ſum is, God is the Judge of the World, and we muſt leave men to the Judgment of God, and judge nothing before the time, nor diſturb our thoughts with ſome curious Queſtions how God will judge the world; we certainly know how we ſhall be judged, even by the Goſpel of our Saviour, and therefore ought to take care to prepare our Accounts: But how thoſe ſhall be judged who never heard of the Goſpel, we know not, and are not concerned to know; but if we will be judging, we ought to judge very charitably, becauſe as I obſerved before, *With what judgment we judge, we ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure we meet, it ſhall be meaſured unto us again.*

But before I diſmiſs this Argument, I cannot but take notice of ſome great and viſible miſchiefs of this judging mens Final State, whether we damn or ſave them:

1. As

1. As first for Damning, especially when we damn them by wholesale, as the Church of *Rome* damns all Hereticks, and as others with as much Charity damn all Papists and Malignants, or whoever they are pleased to vote for Hereticks. Now what the effect of this is, is visible to all the World: It destroys not only Christian Love and Charity, but even common Humanity: when Men have voted one another damned, and believe God will damn those whom they have adjudged to Damnation, then they are the Enemies of God, and they think they do God good service to destroy them: God hates them, and therefore they think it a sin in them, to love those whom God hates, or to have any pity or compassion for those whom God will damn. And thus they burn Hereticks, or cut their Throats, or Confiscate their Estates, and drive them out from among them, and treat them with all the Barbarity and Indignities which a damning Zeal and Fury can invent. All other Villanies may meet with some Pity and Charity, but Charity is Lukewarmness and want of Zeal in God's Cause; there is no Fire burns so furiously, nor so outragiously consumes, as that which is kindled at God's Altar. And thus the Christian Church is turned into a great shambles, and stained with the Blood of Human, nay of Christian Sacrifices: though were they in the right, that God would damn those Men, whom they have damned, why should they think Patience and Forbearance a greater Fault in them than it is in God, *who beareth with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?* Why are they so unmerciful as to hurry away these poor wretches immediately into Hell, when

God is contented to let them live on ; to let the Tares and the Wheat grow up together till the Harveſt ? Why do they envy them the ſhort and periſhing Contentments of this Life, when they are to ſuffer an Eternity of Miſery ? Methinks it ſhould ſatisfy the moſt implacable Hatred to know, that they muſt be miſerable for ever, though their Miſeries ſhould be adjourned for ſome few Years : but if this be the Effect of damning men, you may gueſs that the Cauſe is not very good ; though an uncharitable Judgment will hurt no Body but themſelves, yet it is of dangerous Conſequence, when ſuch raſh Judges will be as haſty Executioners too.

2. Though the Effects of ſaving men, and voting them to Heaven be not ſo Tragical as thoſe of damning them, yet this has its Miſchiefs too ; when any Party of men have voted themſelves the only true Church, wherein Salvation is to be had, or the only Saints and Elect People of God, then all who will be ſaved muſt herd with them ; and moſt men think it enough to ſecure their Salvation, to get into their Number : Thus the Church of *Rome* frightens men into her Communion, by threatning Damnation againſt all who are out of that Church ; and this reconciles men to all their Superſtitions and Idolatries for fear of Damnation, and encourages them in all manner of Looſneſs and Debauchery, when they are got into a Church which can ſave them ; and it has much the ſame effect, when men liſt themſelves with any Party, where they hope to be ſaved for Company, while all the reſt of mankind, even thoſe who profeſs the Faith of Chriſt, are

are no better than the World, and the Ungodly and Reprobates, who though they may have more Moral Virtues than ſome others, yet have no Grace.

And the miſchief of this increaſes, when men are Sainted after death: Had it not been for this Trick, the Church of *Rome* had had very few Saints to Worſhip, none but the Virgin *Mary* and the Apoſtles, whom they might certainly conclude to be in Heaven; but as for their other Saints, who were the great Founders and examples of their Superſtition, they are Saints of their own making, juſt as the Heathens made their gods; and it is the Stories and Legends of theſe Saints, which ſupport the Superſtition of the Church of *Rome*; for who dares queſtion the Examples of thoſe who are canonized Saints in Heaven? *Hac arte Pollux, & vagus Hercules innixus, arces attigit igneas.*

And there are another ſort of men, who are not behind-hand with them in this, who have a great many more Saints than the Church of *Rome*, though they don't pray to them; who ſend great ſhoals to Heaven, eſpecially if they have been zealous for promoting a Party, which hides all other Faults, and ſanctifies very doubtful Actions; and how powerful muſt the Example of ſuch Saints be to excite others to an imitation of their Virtues?

In a word, when we pretend to ſend men to Heaven, we make them our Rules and Examples; we hope to go to Heaven with all the Faults they had; and thoſe who knew them, poſſibly knew a great many; and what they were eminent for, we conclude were great Virtues, and fit for our imitation

tation, tho otherwise of a doubtful and suspicious nature.

There is not a more dangerous thing than to make any Man our Rule and Example, and yet that we necessarily do, when we send him to Heaven; for who would not think himself safe in imitating those whom he believes to be in Heaven? and if we consider, at what rate both the Church of *Rome*, and others make Saints, we must needs be sensible, how infinitely dangerous this is to mens Souls.

To conclude this Head: Let us judge charitably of all men, and hope well according to the different reasons we have to hope, but let us leave their final State to God, neither peremptorily damn nor save them; it is to be feared, that Human Judgment has sent many men to Heaven, who will never get thither; and to be hoped, that many men shall meet with a more favourable Sentence in the next World, than they do in this. God is the Judge of the World, and he will certainly judge us, and there is no Inconvenience in staying till the Day of Judgment, to see what mens final Sentence shall be, but very great Mischief in pronouncing a rash and hasty Judgment our selves.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Fourth Inference: To refer all Difficulties to the Day of Judgment.

IV. IF God will Judge the World, let us refer all Difficulties to the Day of Judgment. It muſt be confeſſed, that there are very great Difficulties in Providence, ſuch as the wiſeſt men cannot underſtand; and I can by no means ſay it is a Fault for men to ſearch into Providence, and to be very inquiſitive into the reaſons of it; for what can more become a reaſonable Creature, than to ſtudy the Works of God? And what works more worth our ſtudy, than the Divine Providence, and the wonderful Myſteries of God's governing the World?

But the Difficulty is to ſet Bounds to the Curioſity of Mankind, to teach them to ſtudy Providence with the Modeſty of Creatures, and with the juſt Reverence which we owe to God, whoſe Wiſdom is infinite and unſearchable; to be contented to diſcover what we can, to admire and adore the Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Juſtice of Providence in what is plain; and there is enough plain to exerciſe our devout Meditations, to be matter of our Praiſe and Thankſgivings, and a ſure foundation of our Truſt in God.

And this wiſe and good men are contented with; but moſt men take leaſt notice of what is plain, as if that were of no uſe, and not worth notice, but puzzle their thoughts, and loſe themſelves in thoſe vaſt Depths and Abyſſes which no Human Underſtanding can fathom: To correct this Miſcarriage

carriage would do great ſervice to Religion, would give great peace and ſatisfaction to mens minds, and prevent a great many ſcandalous Diſputes about the Divine Providence: and therefore if I diſcourſe this a little more at large, than my preſent Argument requires, I hope it will be no great fault. Now to ſet bounds to our Curioſity, and to make us Modeſt in our Inquiries into Providence, I ſhall ſhew you,

I. How dangerous it is to ſearch too narrowly into the Secrets of Providence.

II. How unreaſonable it is to diſturb our minds with ſuch difficulties as we cannot anſwer.

III. That what cannot be known in this World, it is time enough for us to know in the World to come.

IV. That we have all the reaſon in the World to believe, that what we cannot know in this World, will be made very plain and eaſy at the Day of Judgment.

I. As for the firſt, How dangerous ſuch curious Inquiries into Providence are, this is plain in the evil Effects of it:

1. For firſt, this either makes men Atheiſts, or at leaſt is made a pretence to juſtify Atheiſm. The Natural Notion all men have of God is, That he is an infinitely Wiſe, and Good, and Juſt, and Powerful Being: Now when men obſerve ſuch things, either in the Make or Frame of the World, or in the Conduct and Government of it, as they cannot

cannot reconcile with the Notions they have of Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs, they preſently conclude, that there is no God, or that he is nothing to them, that he neither made nor governs the World.

This indeed is a very raſh and haſty Concluſion, to deny the Being of God, becauſe we cannot find out God to Perfection; when we muſt confeſs, that it is impoſſible for a finite Underſtanding to comprehend all the Reaſons of an Infinite Mind: but thus it muſt be, when men won't be contented to be ignorant of any thing, nor permit God to do what they can't underſtand, but will have a reaſon of every thing God does, or will not allow him to be God: A modeſt Inquirer ſees enough in the works of Creation and Providence, to ſatisfy him, that the World was made, and is governed by a wiſe Being; but thoſe who think themſelves wiſe enough to make and govern a World, a great deal better than this World is made and governed, or are upon other accounts averſe to the Belief of a God, and have a mind to quarrel with him; take no notice of what is wiſe and good, and proves God to be infinitely Wiſe, and infinitely Good, tho they cannot open their Eyes without ſeeing a thouſand ſuch Inſtances of Wiſdom and Goodneſs; but imploy the little Wit they have to find Faults, and account every thing they can't underſtand a Fault. This is ſuch Irreverence to God, ſuch Preſumption and Arrogance, and ſuch Impiety, that they ſeem to be Atheiſts firſt, and then to quarrel with God's Works to find out ſome Pretence to deny his Being: it is certain, whoever indulges himſelf in this, has in a great meaſure loſt his Reverence for God, and Atheiſm is a natural

tural consequence and just punishment of that; and such a terrible punishment it is, as should make us afraid of being over-curious in matters so far above us.

2. If this does not make us Atheists, yet it is apt to give us very wrong Notions concerning God, which is a very great Evil, next to Atheism it self.

This we know tempted some men to assert two Principles, or two Gods, a good and a bad God; for when they observed such a mixture of Good and Evil in the nature of things, they thought it impossible, that a good God should be the Author of so much Evil as is in this World; and because they could not answer this Difficulty, nor give an account how a good God should make and govern the World, and yet there be so much Evil and Wickedness in it; they concluded that there was a bad God, who was the Author of all the Evil in the World, and a good God of all the Good. But this starts a much more unaccountable Difficulty, how a good and a bad God should agree together in making and governing the World: For can any thing be more opposite to each other, than essential Good and Essential Evil? They can never agree, and therefore they must be either equal in Power, or must destroy each other; if they be equal, neither of them are Omnipotent, for two Omnipotents is a Contradiction; and then neither one nor both could make the World, which is a Work of Omnipotence: At least since it is impossible they should agree together to make a World; as impossible, as that essential Goodness should consent to any thing that

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is Evil; or essential Evil consent to any thing that is good; they must necessarily hinder each other in making the World, if their Power were equal; and then the World had never been made. But I shall not trouble you with the Confutation of this, but only point you to the Source and Origine of this mischief, which in its Consequence overthrows all Religion.

Others to ease themselves of these Difficulties of reconciling all the Passages of Providence to God's Wisdom and Justice, set them both aside, and resolve all into God's Arbitrary and Soveraign Will and Pleasure; who makes himself, and the advancement of his own Glory his sole end. They lay it down indeed as an agreed Principle, That all that God does is wise, and good, and just; but we must not examine this by Human Rules and Measures of Goodness and Justice; for God is an absolute Soveraign, and unaccountable to his Creatures; his Will is the Rule of Justice, and he wills what is most for his own Glory; he magnifies his Goodness and Grace in a free and arbitrary kindness to some of his Creatures; and magnifies his Justice in as free and arbitrary Severities to others: he makes some Creatures to be Objects of his Love, and others to be the Objects of his Vengeance and Displeasure: and thus they cut the Knot which they can't untie.

But this is a greater Difficulty than all the rest, to a considering man, who would much rather chuse to give no account of the Divine Providence, than to give so ill an account of the Nature of God: Arbitrary Will and Power is the very worst Notion we can have of God; it destroys our Love

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to him, and our Hope and Confidence in him, unless we can fancy him as partial to us as we are to our selves; it turns Religion into a superstitious dread of God, or hypocritical Flatteries; destroys the Notions of Good and Evil, or all regard to them, while we think God takes no notice of them himself.

This may satisfy us, how dangerous it is to be too inquisitive into the Mysteries of Providence, which God hath thought fit to conceal from us; which should make us careful to keep our distance, and humbly to reverence and adore God, and trust his Wisdom beyond our own Understanding of things; and in order to cure this Curiosity, consider,

II. How unreasonable it is to disturb our Minds with such Difficulties of Providence, as we cannot answer; or to draw any such Conclusions from them, as shall either shake our Faith as to the Being or Providence of God, or corrupt our Notions of him; and there are two things which may satisfy any man in this:

1*st*, That there are a great many things which are called Difficulties, which may be very fairly accounted for; and therefore the Difficulty is not in the things, but owing to our want of Understanding; which is reason enough to presume, that thus it may be in other cases too, since as mens Knowledge increases, so the Difficulties of Providence lessen; which should make us never quarrel at Providence, but bewail our own Ignorance, and grow modest under a sense of it.

2*dly*, That in such matters as we can give no account of, there may be plain reasons assigned why

why no account can be given of them in this world:

1. As for the first, it is easy to give many Instances of it: There are many things which mankind greatly complain of, and for which they think themselves very hardly used by God, which upon a true Estimate of things, considering the corrupt state of Human Nature, are greatly for the Happiness of the World; and tho they were inflicted as Punishments by God, yet have an excellent temperament of Wisdom and Goodness.

This I have formerly shewed you, as to that sentence of Death which God pronounced against Mankind, after the fall of our first Parents, *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*; and as to his shortning the Lives of men after the Flood; and I shall now give another Instance in that Curse God pronounced upon the Earth for the Sin of man, to which we owe most of that Pain, and Toil, and Labour, which is under the Sun, and most of the Miseries and Calamities of Human Life: And if in this also the Wisdom and Goodness, as well as the Justice and Severity of God appears, I hope it will convince us how reasonable it is to be modest in our Censures of Providence, and to conclude, that God is equally wise and good in those things which we do not understand. *Practical Discourse of Death*, Ch. 2. Sect. 1.

The Justice of this is very evident; for when Man who was the Lord of the Creation, had rebelled against God, it was very just for God to punish him; and the most proper Punishment which he could inflict on him, next to his own Mortali-

ty, was to Curſe thoſe Creatures which were made for his uſe and delight: As God told *Adam*, when he had eaten the forbidden Fruit, *Becauſe thou haſt hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it: curſed is the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee; and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field. In the ſweat of thy brow ſhalt thou eat bread, until thou return to the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken; for duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return*, 3. Gen. 17. For I need not tell you this Curſe upon the Ground was no puniſhment to the Ground, which was ſenſible of no hurt, but to Man, who was to live upon it; it defaced the Beauty and Glory of the Creation, and entailed a toilſome and painful Life on him; it made his Food leſs wholſome, and more hard to come by: And whereas all Creatures before were in perfect ſubjection to man, according to the grand Character of the Creation, *Have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth*, 1. Gen. 28. Now we find by experience that they have caſt off this Yoke, and very often revenge the Quarrel of their Maker upon Apoſtate man. Thus man fell from the Glory and Happineſs of his Nature; and yet if we wiſely conſider things, we ſhall find excellent Wiſdom and Goodneſs even in this Curſe.

For man having corrupted himſelf, the beſt ſtate he could be put into, was an induſtrious and laborious Life; to force him to work hard to get his living, and to earn his Bread with the ſweat of his

his brows, which was the neceſſary and immediate Effect of God's curſing the Ground; that whereas before, the Earth would have ſupplied man with all things for his Neceſſity and Delight, without his care and labour, now it would not yield its Increaſe of it ſelf, but brought forth Briars and Thorns. And as difficult a ſtate as this is, it was very fit for fallen man.

1. A laborious life is of great uſe to ſubdue the fleſhly Principle, and to prevent the opportunities, and occaſions, and temptations to ſin. The experience of the world tells us, that nothing more corrupts mens Manners than Idleneſs, the Fleſh grows rampant with Sloth and Luxury; and Time it ſelf is ſo uneaſy and troubleſome when we have nothing to do, that men rather chuſe to be wicked, than to be idle; and therefore God who foreſaw the Degeneracy of Mankind by the Fall, hath provided work for us, that with the ſweat of our Brow we muſt eat our Bread.

2. This does not only employ the Bodies, but the Minds of men: Puts them upon the ſtudy of Philoſophy, and the Invention of Arts and Sciences; upon obſerving the works of Nature, and Dependance of Cauſes and Effects; to obſerve the Motions of the Heaven, the Sun, and Moon, and Planets, thereby to know the Seaſons of the Year, and to fix the time of their return; it is this neceſſity to which we owe the moſt uſeful diſcoveries in Nature, which is not only very beneficial to the World, but a very delightful Entertainment, and the moſt natural Ornament and Perfection of our Minds.

3. The Neceſſities of Human Life are the foundation of Human Societies, and make men combine together for mutual Help and Comfort: For tho Man is a ſociable Creature, and delighted with Human Converſation, yet in this degenerate ſtate, nothing is a greater endearment than our mutual Dependance upon each other, that we cannot live ſingle and apart, becauſe we want a great many things which the Skill and Labour of other men muſt ſupply us with.

Now this obliges us to the exerciſe of all friendly and ſociable Virtues; brings us under Government, without which Human Societies cannot ſubſiſt; and this lays great reſtraints upon the Luſts of men, and by a ſtrict Diſcipline trains them up to the practice of moral Virtues, which is a good means to correct the Degeneracy of Human Nature; it inſpires us with Principles of Love and Humanity, of Juſtice and Charity, and ſoftens and poliſhes our Natures by the mutual Endearments of Converſation; it makes us Friends to Mankind; gives us a ſenſe of Injuries, and an abhorrence of them; and which is more than this, it gives publick Countenance and Encouragement to Religion; for Publick Government muſt encourage Religion, becauſe Religion is its greateſt Defence and Support; and this makes ſome men ſincerely Religious and Devout, and forces ſome external ſigns of Honour from thoſe who have little ſenſe or reverence of a Deity, which tho it does no good to them, is for the advantage of the World.

So that this Curſe in the neceſſary Conſequences of it, is the greateſt Bleſſing to Mankind; which is an abundant Juſtification of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in it. A more

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eaſy ſtate of Life did better become a ſtate of Innocence; but ſince the fall, ſuch an eaſy, careleſs, unconcerned Life, would have ſunk man lower into Senſuality, and made his Recovery more deſperate and hopeleſs.

It were eaſy to give many Inſtances of this nature, to juſtify the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs in ſuch paſſages of Providence as ſeem very harſh and ſevere to us; but this may ſuffice at preſent to make us modeſt in our Cenſures of Providence, and not to perplex our minds with ſuch Difficulties as we cannot unriddle.

2. Eſpecially if we add, That there is a plain and evident reaſon why we cannot and never ſhall be able to underſtand a great many Difficulties of Providence in this world, and therefore ought not to cenſure the Divine Providence, becauſe we cannot in all caſes comprehend the reaſons of it. As for inſtance;

We are very ignorant of men, and therefore can never be able to give an account of GOD's Providence towards them: We can in general juſtify the Divine Providence both as to the Afflictions and Sufferings of good men, and the Proſperity of the wicked; but when we deſcend to particulars, we are at a loſs; why ſuch a good man is a great Sufferer, and another good man proſperous; why ſuch a bad man reaps the juſt Rewards of his Villanies in this world, while another man equally bad, eſcapes, and proſpers by his Wickedneſs. We cannot know this, becauſe we do not ſufficiently know men. We may miſtake thoſe for good men, who are ſecret Hypocrites, and carry on wicked Deſigns under a

Masque of Religion; and then when we complain that such a good man suffers, God may be very just in punishing an Hypocrite. We know not what the secret Distempers of good men are, which may require a severe Remedy; nor what good there may be even in bad men, which may make their Recovery hopeful, and make it reasonable for God to spare.

Thus we know not how particular mens Interests are interwoven with each other, or with the Publick, which may make it reasonable for God to spare or to punish them upon more accounts than their own; for good men may suffer in the Sufferings of the wicked, and be blessed in their Prosperity: The Sufferings of good men, and the Prosperity of the wicked, may be of publick use to the world; and it is very just and reasonable in the wise Governor of the world, to make the Interests of private men subordinate to a publick Good. But when this is necessary, we know not, and therefore are very incompetent Judges of the Divine Providence: Nay, we see but a very little part of God's Providence towards particular men; but a Scene or two of their Lives, or it may be but a little piece of a Scene, and therefore it is impossible we should make a true Judgment of God's Providence towards them, the Beauty of which consists in the proportion of Parts, and adapting every thing to the end it serves. The History of *Joseph* taken altogether, is a Demonstration of God's tender care of him, though there were some doleful Scenes of his Life; the hard Usage he met with from his Brethren, who sold him for a Slave into *Egypt*; and

and from a wicked Miſtreſs there, whoſe falſe Accuſations condemned him to a Jayl, from whence God raiſed him to *Pharaoh*'s Throne. There are very few men can make any Objection againſt the Divine Providence, with reſpect to themſelves, becauſe they know themſelves, and the ſeveral ſtages of their lives, what good and evil they have done, and what they have deſerved, and what they have received from God; which is a good Argument that we ſhould find as little to except againſt the Providence of God to other men alſo, did we know them as perfectly as we know our ſelves.

III. As for what cannot be known in this world, it is time enough for us to know it in the world to come.

Indeed this knowledge is not fit for us in this world; it is not fit we ſhould know one another ſo perfectly, as is neceſſary to vindicate every paſſage of God's Providence towards other men; for this would be to have a Caſement into each others breaſts, to underſtand all the Intrigues and Secrets of Families; and were it put to our own choice, I am apt to think we ſhould rather be contented to be Ignorant of a great many things, than to be ſo well known our ſelves to all the world.

Nor is it fitting in this ſtate, that we ſhould ſo perfectly underſtand all the Secrets of the Divine Counſel, for what reaſon he afflicts or proſpers private men, or publick Societies, as is neceſſary to make a judgment of the Divine Providence. One great Myſtery of Government is to conceal Counſels; and this is the Glory of the Divine Providence, by dark and myſterious Methods to bring

about glorious Deſigns, to ſurprize the world with unexpected Bleſſings, or unſeen Evils, to keep them in conſtant awe and dependance on himſelf.

And then of what uſe is it to us, to be able to give a reaſon of every particular Paſſage of Providence? We have nothing to do to ſit in Judgment upon God; and therefore if we know enough to be a ſteady Foundation of our Faith and Hope, we know all that is needful in this Life: God does not intend to gratify our Curioſity, or our Scepticiſm: We muſt not perfectly know God in this world, for we muſt live by Faith here, which ſuppoſes an imperfect Knowledge; but perfect Sight and Knowledge is the Reward and Happineſs of Heaven.

It is the laſt Act which explains the whole Plot, the reſt is Amuſement and Surpriſe; and therefore the proper time to underſtand the whole Myſtery of Providence, is when all is finiſhed: When God puts an end to this World, he will think fit to diſplay that infinite variety of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, which governed the World from the beginning to the end.

IV. And this we may expect to underſtand at the Day of Judgment; for I know no other reaſon why God ſhould in ſo ſolemn a manner Judge the world, but to juſtify the Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs of his Providence to all his Creatures.

God does not thus publickly Judge the world, to enquire into mens Lives, and Actions, and Deſerts, which is the reaſon of Human Judgments, to convince Sinners by Witneſſes and Evidences, and to inform the Judge in matters of Fact; but God perfectly

perfectly knows us all; and every man's Conſcience is a Witneſs againſt himſelf, that God might without any farther ſolemnity adjudge every man to his proper Place and Reward: But he conſults his own Glory in this, and ſummons all his Creatures together, that Men and Angels may underſtand, and be Witneſſes of his Mercy and Juſtice.

Now it is impoſſible God ſhould juſtify his Providence, without expounding the Reaſons of it; and therefore then we may expect to underſtand the Caſe of the Fallen Angels, which now we know nothing of; and all the Paſſages and various Scenes of Providence, from the Fall of *Adam*, till the end of the World: Then the ſtate of Nations, of Kingdoms, of Churches, and of private men, will be explained; the Secrets of Hearts will be diſcloſed, and the hidden Works of Darkneſs brought to light.

Let us then ſtay till this Day comes, when God will juſtify his Providence againſt all the Reproaches and evil Surmiſes of men, for he *will appear juſt when he judgeth, and overcome when he contendeth.* Let us not diſturb our heads with ſuch Difficulties as we cannot underſtand now; we know enough to believe that *God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*; enough to make us devout Worſhippers of God: And to enquire farther is a dangerous Curioſity, like looking into the Ark of God.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Fifth Inference: To affect our Souls with a strong, and vigorous, and constant Sense of Judgment.

V. SInce it is certain that God will Judge the World, let us endeavour by all means possible to affect our Souls with a strong, and vigorous, and constant Sense of Judgment: The Belief of a Future Judgment is worth little, when it ends in Speculation; the use of it is to govern our Lives, and to prepare us to give a good Account of our selves to God, since we know that he will demand an Account of us: But a mere Belief that we shall be judged, will not do this, unless we affect our Souls with a Sense of Judgment. The Experience of the world, and our own Experience of our selves, does sufficiently prove this: We all profess to believe a Future Judgment, and most of us do heartily believe it; and yet there are too many among us, who give little reason to the world to think they believe it; who commit those Sins every day, for which they know God will damn them when they come to Judgment; which one would think those who believe they shall be judged, could never do: So that a mere Belief of a Future Judgment cannot govern mens lives; but then these very men, when they are awakened into a Dread and Fear of Judgment, feel the Virtue and Power of it on their Hearts; it makes them hate their Sins, and hate themselves for them; it makes them very devout and importunate in their Prayers, very sin-

ſincere and paſſionate in their Repentance, very reſolved to forſake all their ſins, and to live a new life; and therefore if we would have the Belief of a Future Judgment make us good men, we muſt not only believe it, but affect our Souls with a great Senſe of it; which is true of all the other Arguments and Motives of Religion, as well as of a Future Judgment.

The proper Enquiry then here is, How we ſhall awaken and preſerve ſuch a powerful Senſe of Judgment in our minds.

Now the only general Direction that can be given is, Frequently to Think and Meditate on a Future Judgment; for nothing can affect our Minds, but our Thoughts, which make the Object preſent, and give us a near View of it: As it is in the Objects of Senſe, the Eye affects the Heart, and excites and moves the Affections more than all the Arguments in the world: If we look ſtedfaſtly upon a terrible and frightful Object, it will ſtrike Terror into us; if upon a pleaſant and beautiful Object, it will excite Love and Delight; if upon a miſerable Object, it will affect us with a tender Compaſſion; to ſee men in great Want and Miſery, will melt and open that Heart which was hardened and ſhut againſt all the Arguments and Motives to Charity: And long and frequent Conſideration will have much the ſame effect on us that Sight has: Judgment is a terrible thing to bad men, and if they would but ſeriouſly think of it, it would terrify them; if they would but imagine ſometimes, *that they heard that laſt Trumpet ſound, which will awaken all Mankind, and raiſe them out of their Graves, and ſummon them to Judgment; that they ſaw the Son of man*

man descend from Heaven, attended with his mighty Angels, to execute Vengeance on all them who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they saw the Earth all in flames about them, and Hell opening her Mouth wide to receive them; that they saw the Books opened, and those Sins recorded which they had forgot, and the Secrets of their Hearts disclosed; and that they heard that terrible Sentence, Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; do you think that any man who believes all this, and would suffer himself seriously to think of it, could bear up against the Terrors of it? Or that with these Thoughts about him, he could court a Strumpet, or spend his Time in Revels and Excess, or Blaspheme God, and Ridicule Religion, or Cheat his Neighbour, or oppress the Poor and Fatherless, or forswear himself? No! we see this cannot be, as often as we see a miserable Sinner whose awakened Conscience distracts him with all these Scenes and Images of Terror.

So that Serious Consideration would make a Future Judgment very effectual to govern our Lives; but the great Difficulty of all is to bring men to Consider; and yet one would think it impossible that a Reasonable Creature should not consider that he must be judged: But so it is, and there is no disputing against Experience; and yet is this so dangerous and fatal a Neglect, that it concerns us to enquire into the Cause and Remedies of it; for could we cure this, it would quickly reform the World, give a new Resurrection to Piety and Virtue, and secure men from the Danger and Terrors of a Future Judgment. Now there are two apparent Causes

ſes of this, 1. That the Thoughts of Judgment are very uneaſy and troubleſom, and that makes men afraid and averſe to think of it. And 2. That Judgment is out of ſight, and they have nothing to mind them of it, and their Thoughts are ſo taken up with other matters, that they forget it, unleſs they happen to hear a Sermon about it, or ſome accidental mention of it; which when they return to their worldly Affairs and Buſineſs, they quickly forget again.

1*ſt*. Men are very apt to avoid all Thoughts of Judgment, becauſe they are very uneaſy and troubleſome; they ſtartle at the mention of it; at leaſt do not love to talk too long, nor think too ſeriouſly of it; for it awakens their Conſciences, and makes them think what a ſad Account they have to give; how many things they have done, and daily do, which they can never anſwer to God, when he comes to Judgment; and therefore they chuſe to live quietly, without diſturbing themſelves with ſuch terrifying Reflections, and the amazing Thoughts of what is to come. Now methinks it is no hard thing to convince thinking men of the Danger and Folly of this, and to reconcile them to the Thoughts of Judgment: For,

1. To drive theſe Thoughts out of our Minds, though it may give us preſent eaſe, yet it will not mend our Accounts, nor prevent our being judged: God will judge us, whether we will think of being judged or not: Were no men to be judged but thoſe who think of it, there were as much reaſon to ſtupify our Conſciences,

ces, and never to think of Judgment, as there is for sick men to take Opiates to sleep away their Pain and their Distemper together; but this would be thought a very ill Remedy for their present Pain, were they to sleep away their Lives: And yet this is the Remedy these men chuse, to sleep away their Souls; to sleep away the Fears of Judgment, till Judgment awakens them and their Fears, never to sleep more.

2. How frighful soever the Thoughts of Judgment are, it will be infinitely more terrible to see and feel it: And there is no way to avoid that terrible Condemnation, but by thinking of it; the Fear of Judgment, if once it throughly possesses our Souls, will conquer this World, disarm all its Terrors, discover its Cheats and Impostures, wash off its Paint and Varnish, pluck off its Vizor and Disguise; it will teach us to fear God, which is the beginning of Wisdom, the Guide of Youth, and the Counsellor of Age; And would not any wise man rather chuse to preserve himself from Danger and Misery by fearing it, than to live without Fear, and to perish by his Security? In this World men love to know and see their Danger, that they may avoid it, how dismal soever the Prospect be; and it is very unaccountable, that men should chuse rather to be damned, than to prevent it by a timely Foresight, and a prudent Fear and Caution.

For 3. That Fear of Judgment which is necessary to govern our Lives, and to prevent our final

final Condemnation, is not ſo amazing and terrifying as theſe men apprehend it; it is not the Fear of a man who is going to Execution, but the Fear of Prudence, Caution, and Foreſight; which makes men wiſe and circumſpect, but don't diſtract them: We have as many Demonſtrations of this, as there are men who govern their Lives under the Fear and Senſe of a Future Judgment; are there any men in the world who live more chearfully than they, who converſe more pleaſantly with their Friends, and enjoy the Comforts of Life with greater Innocence and Freedom? Do you find any Diſturbance in their Looks, any Symptoms of an uneaſy and frighted Imagination? And yet theſe men all this while live under the conſtant Awe and Fear of Judgment: And therefore the Senſe and Fear of Judgment is conſiſtent with a conſtant Peace and Serenity of Mind.

That which diſtracts and terrifies men, is not the conſtant Awe and Senſe of Judgment, but the Condemnation of their own guilty Conſciences, which threaten the Judgments of God againſt them; and when men apprehend themſelves a falling into Hell, and fear their Caſe is hopeleſs and irrecoverable, it is no wonder if the very Pains of Hell take hold of them; and not being able to bear theſe Horrors, they ſilence or ſtupify their Conſciences with the Noiſe, and Buſineſs, and Diverſions, and Pleaſures of this Life, and can never endure to entertain the leaſt Thought of Judgment, and imagine that all who do, live a miſerable Life, are as melancholly and diſturbed as they are, when they think of Judgment:

ment: But this is a great mistake; it is their Guilt which makes the Thoughts of Judgment so terrible, and their not thinking of Judgment betrayed them to that Guilt, and nothing but a constant Sense of Judgment can now expiate their Guilt, and conquer their Fears by Repentance and a new Life: And as terrible as this is for the present, it is is more desirable than to be damned. But would men accustom themselves betimes to the Thoughts of Judgment, and govern their Lives under the sense of it, Judgment would never be terrible to them, no more than the Assize is to men who have an Awe and Reverence for the Justice of their Countrey, and obey its Laws.

Nay, 4. When we govern our Lives under the Awe of a Future Judgment, it is so far from being terrible, that it fills us with great and joyful hopes; for when God judges the world, he will reward good men, as well as punish the wicked: And if the Fear of a Future Judgment makes us truly and sincerely good, we shall long for the Day of Judgment, as the Husbandman does for the Harvest; this will be our great Support and Comfort under all the Calamities of Life, and be a perpetual Spring of the most Sincere and Divine Joys.

This may satisfy us, that there is no reason to be afraid to think of Judgment; that to live under the constant sense of it, as it is the only way to make us truly good men, so it will deliver us from all guilty Fears, support us under all present Troubles, and delight us with the hope and expectation of glorious Rewards.

2*ly*, As for thoſe who out of meer Careleſneſs and Inconſideration, never think ſeriouſly about a Future Judgment, who imploy all their Thoughts about preſent and ſenſible Objects, but do not concern themſelves about what is abſent and unſeen, or think very ſeldom, and very coldly and tranſiently of it. It is a Wonder to me, how Men need be put in mind of a matter of ſuch vaſt concernment and importance to them, as a Future Judgment is: Does not the happineſs of your Immortal Souls depend on it? Is it poſſible to conquer the temptations of this World; to reſiſt the Sollicitations of the Fleſh, the Courtſhip of Riches and Honour, thoſe gilded Vanities of this Life, without remembring, that for all theſe things God will call us to Judgment? Methinks men ſhould as ſoon venture themſelves in a Rocky and Tempeſtuous Sea; without Rudder, or Pilot, or Compaſs, or Ballaſt, or Anchor, as to think to paſs ſafe through this World without a conſtant Awe and Senſe of a Future Judgment. Such Men are very careleſs of their Souls, and they muſt loſe them; for they will never get ſafe to Heaven; they can never give a good account to God when he comes to Judgment, who never think of any account they are to make.

But beſides this, as one would think that a Future Judgment is of that great moment, that no Man who is at all concerned for his Future Happineſs, could ſuffer it to go out of his Mind; ſo there is little reaſon in

this case, to complain of want of Monitors; for though we do not see the Judgment-Seat, and all the awful Solemnities of Judgment, and it is impossible we should, for it is not yet; yet there are a thousand things to put us in mind of it; and if it be possible to forget a matter of such consequence without something to refresh our Memories, and to renew the Impression of it, I shall briefly hint to you some things which occur every day, and are very familiar Emblems of Judgment, and desire you to unite the Thoughts of a Future Judgment to them; that when you see the one, you may think of the other; which will be a kind of artificial Memory, when you find the Notes and Characters of Judgment so frequently presented to you. As to give you three or four familiar Instances of this, which you may very easily multiply:

When you are so busy and careful in keeping your Books, and casting up your Accounts, and Balancing your Gain and your Loss, and observing how your Stock increases or decays, can you forbear thinking, that you have a greater and more concerning account than this, the Account of your Life and Actions? which if you do not keep, God does; he has his Records of them, and will produce his Books at the Day of Judgment, and judge you out of them.

When you call your Servants or Stewards to an account, how they have improved or imbezled your Goods, whether they have hid their

their Talent in a Napkin, or traded with it, and gained five or ten Talents; you ſhould remember, that you alſo are but God's Stewards, and muſt give an Account of your Stewardſhip, and either ſhall be Stewards no longer, but be turned out of your Maſter's Service, and be puniſhed for your Negligence, or ſhall receive a Reward proportionable to your Diligence and Gain.

When we correct our Children or Servants for their Idleneſs, Diſobedience, or any other Miſcarriage, or Reward their Diligence and Virtue, can we forget, that we have a Father and a Maſter in Heaven, who curiouſly obſerves all our Actions, and will judge, will reward and puniſh us according to our Works?

When we ſee at Harveſt the Wheat gathered into the Barn, and the Weeds neglected or burnt, ſhould it not mind us what a difference God will make between good and bad Men at the Day of Judgment; that though they live intermixed in this World, they ſhall be parted then; good men received into Heaven, where God dwells, and bad men baniſhed into outer Darkneſs, where there is Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnaſhing of teeth for evermore.

The awful Solemnities of Human Judicatures, the Judge ſitting on the Bench, the Malefactor arraigned at the Bar; the Jury, the Witneſſes, the Trial, Condemnation, Sentence, Execution, are lively Emblems of a Future Judgment, and methinks ſhould mind Judge, and Juries, and Witneſſes, and Spectators, of it.

I have mentioned theſe few Inſtances becauſe they are common and familiar, and Scripture-Repreſentations of a Future Judgment, and ſo often occur, that if we would but as often think ſeriouſly of a Future Judgment, we ſhould ſoon attain an habitual Senſe of it: and poſſibly my applying them to this purpoſe now, as little an Obſervation as it may ſeem, may make you think of your great Account, when you are caſting up your Books, or reckoning with your Workmen, or taking an Account of your Stewards and Servants; and if it ſhould, I ſhall have my end, and you will find the benefit of it.

But there is one thing which is naturally apt to mind us of a Future Judgment, and I am ſure always ought to do ſo, and is of very near and preſent concernment to us at this time, and that is, *When the judgments of GOD are in the earth*, for then as the Prophet *Iſaiah* tells us, *the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs*, 26. Iſaiah 9.

I have already obſerved to you, that the Examples of a juſt and righteous Providence, which governs this World, are a good Proof of a Future Judgment; for it is an argument, that God does take notice of the Actions of Men, and concerns himſelf in the Government of the World; and then we have no reaſon to queſtion whether he will judge the world.

And when God is actually executing Judgments on the World, when he is judging Kingdoms and Nations, when he has unſheathed the Sword, and made it drunk with Blood,

Blood, when the Deſolations of flouriſhing Countries, the burning of Towns and Cities, the lamentable Slaughter of Infinite numbers of People, do ſo loudly proclaim the Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God, thoſe who ha'n't a great, and awful, and terrible Senſe of Judgment, will never be awakened, but by the ſounding of the laſt Trumpet.

It is this, that makes the Judgments of God ſo effectual to Reform the World, not meerly the Fears of preſent Sufferings, of thoſe Temporal Evils and Calamities, wherewith God puniſhes Sinners; but that by theſe viſible Tokens of God's Anger, by the preſent ſenſible Effects of his Juſtice and Power, Men are rouzed and alarm'd into a Conſideration of Future Vengeance.

We extreamly weaken the Argument from preſent and ſenſible Judgments, when we urge it no further, than to perſuade Men to reform their Lives, to remove thoſe Judgments which are upon them; this is an additional Argument, to reform our Sins to ſave our Country from Ruin; but thoſe who will not reform their Sins to ſave their Souls, will never part with them to ſave a Nation; and therefore the true force of the Argument reſolves it ſelf into a Future Judgment: God has begun to puniſh us already in this World for our Sins; and unleſs we repent, we muſt not hope to eſcape ſo; theſe Temporal Sufferings are but a Summons to Judgment, and it may be are intended to remove us preſently into the other World to receive our Reward: the Axe is

now visibly laid to the Root of the Tree; and every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.

And the visible Execution of GOD's Judgments upon the World, will certainly mind us of a Future Judgment, and give us a feeling sense of it; as it gives us a present and sensible View of God's Justice and Power, and a nearer Prospect of it.

1. It gives us a present and sensible View of God's Justice and Power: And that though he be very good and merciful, he is very righteous too, and very severe in his Judgments; that though he *be gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness*; yet he will not always spare, but *will awake to visit the heathen, and will not be merciful to any wicked transgressors*, 59. Psal. 5.

When we see what Desolations God makes in the Earth, how his Judgments like a sudden and mighty Torrent overflow a secure and happy Country, sweep away the Inhabitants of it, or transplant them into foreign Nations to beg their Bread among Strangers; when we see how he sounds an Alarm to War, and sets Kingdom against Kingdom, and every Man's Sword against his Brother; when we observe with what an Impartial Hand he strikes, that there is no Country, no People, no Religion escapes; that he makes Ambition and Covetousness correct Superstition, and Superstition chastise the Coldness and Formality, the Loose and Licentious Lives of more Orthodox Christians; I say, when

when we ſee ſuch things as theſe in the World, ſhall we not Fear and Tremble before that juſt and righteous Judge? Can we forget that GOD will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, when we ſee already ſuch terrible Executions, which are only Preludiums to a Final Judgment?

2. Theſe preſent and viſible Judgments give us a nearer Proſpect of a Future Judgment; and Judgment will more ſenſibly affect us, the nearer we ſee it: Not that ſuch Judgments as theſe prove, that the Final Judgment is near at hand; for the Records and Hiſtories of former Ages gives us an Account of very terrible Judgments which God then executed upon the World; and yet we ſee the Final Judgment is deferred, and we know not how long it may be deferred ſtill: but tho' the general Judgment may be a great way off, yet our particular Judgment may be very near; God may quickly cut us off, and put an end to our Account; and when the Judgments of God are in the World, we have reaſon to expect it, at leaſt ſo far, as to be prepared for it: *Proximus ardet Ucalegon*; when we ſee the Judgments of God ſweep away ſo many Thouſands round about us, who not long ſince lived as ſecure and unconcerned for danger as we do; when we ſee the Clouds hover and rowl about the Heavens, charged with Thunder and Tempeſt, Who knows where the Storm will break next, and who ſhall feel the Violence of it? And therefore the Judgments of GOD, which are in the Earth, will give all conſidering

Men such a present Sense of a Future Judgment, as a threatning Sickness will do: Present Judgments may suddenly cut us off, and send us into the other World unprepared for a Final Judgment; and there is no preparing for it there; and then these present Judgments may prove Final to us. So that those who live in such an Age as this, will be utterly inexcusable if they forget their Account, which they have such terrible Admonitions of. Let us make this use of present Judgments, to awaken a more lively and vigorous Sense of a Future Judgment in us; and that will make us good Men, and Secure our Eternal Happiness; and is the best way to prevent any publick Calamities of our Country, which we may fear, or to preserve our selves from being involved in them.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Time of Judgment.

SECT. I.

Concerning a particular Judgment at the Time of every Man's Death.

LET us now consider the Time of Judgment, *God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.* Now this plainly refers to that General Judgment, when all Mankind shall be

be ſummoned before the Tribunal of Chriſt, to be judged according to their Works. But before I ſpeak to this, it will be neceſſary to take notice of what we commonly call a Particular Judgment, which is ſuppoſed to paſs upon all Men, as ſoon as they go out of theſe Bodies.

The received Opinion is, that when any Man dies, he is immediately called to Judgment, and receives his Final Sentence, which is immediately executed on him; that a Bad Man is ſentenced to Hell, and ſent immediately thither; that a Good Man is received into Heaven, and enjoys the Beatifick Viſion from the time of his going out of this Body.

But I muſt confeſs, this has always appeared a great Difficulty to me; we live in ſuch an Inquiſitive Age, as will not allow us to affirm what we cannot prove, and indeed no honeſt Man ought to do ſo: for it forfeits any Man's Authority, and weakens the Credit of Religion, when that which has no proof, or at beſt is very uncertain, is taught with as great aſſurance, as that which is moſt certain and unqueſtionable in Religion: and yet no wiſe Man will oppoſe and contradict a received Doctrine, though he were ſatisfied it were a Miſtake, when there are no evil Conſequences attend it: For my part I muſt honeſtly profeſs, that I neither dare affirm nor deny this Particular Judgment in the ſenſe in which it is commonly underſtood; for there are ſome Paſſages in Scripture, which ſeem to look both ways, and ſince I cannot decently avoid

avoid saying something of it, I shall fairly represent to you, what Intimations there are in Scripture about this matter; for there is no other way of knowing this; and I dare teach no more than what the Scripture teaches.

1. Now in the first place, thus much is very plain in the Scripture, That good men when they die, are translated into a place of Ease, and Rest, and Happiness; and Bad men to a place of Misery and Punishment: which I suppose is what men mean by a particular Judgment: for this is a kind of Judgment, tho' it be not performed with all the Pompous Solemnities of Judgment, to allot men their different States of Life, according as they have behaved themselves in this World.

The Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus* is very express to this purpose, 16. *Luke* 19, &c. *There was a certain rich man, which was cloathed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.* —— *And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.* That this relates to the state of Good and Bad men immediately after Death, is very evident, especially from that Request which the rich man made to *Abraham*, to send *Lazarus* to his Father's House; *For*, saith he, *I have five brethren; that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment*: Which shews, that *Lazarus* was in *Abraham*'s Bosom,

Boſom, and *Dives* tormented in Hell, or *Hades*, while his Brethren were living and revelling on Earth; and therefore this can't relate to a General Judgment, but ſignifies that ſtate they entred into as ſoon as they died: And though what is generally ſaid, that we muſt not argue from Parables, is very true as to particular Circumſtances of the Story, which are the Ornaments and Embelliſhments of Parables; yet it is as true, that we muſt argue from the principal Scope and Deſign of them; and then we may certainly conclude from this Parable, that Good and Bad men as ſoon as they dye, are in a ſtate of Happineſs and Miſery; otherwiſe there is no Foundation for this Parable: For why ſhould one be ſent from the Dead to inform the Living what Puniſhments Bad men ſuffer in the next World, if they ſuffer nothing till the Day of Judgment, which is not yet? For in this caſe ſuch a Meſſenger could not be an Eye-witneſs of the Puniſhment of Sinners; which is the only thing that is ſuppoſed to give ſuch Authority to his Teſtimony.

1. I do not remember any other ſuch expreſs Text for the immediate Puniſhment of Sinners as ſoon as they go out or theſe Bodies; and one ſuch Text as this is enough; but there are many Texts to prove, that Good men when they dye, go immediately into a ſtate of Happineſs; nor only *Lazarus* was carried by the Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſom, but Chriſt promiſed the Thief upon the Croſs, that that Day he ſhould be with him in Paradiſe; and St. *Paul* tells us, That *to be at home in the body, is to be abſent*

abſent from the Lord; but when they *are abſent from the body, they ſhall be preſent with the Lord*: That is, when they dye, when they go out of theſe Bodies, they ſhall go to Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6, 8. and this made it ſo difficult a Choice to St. *Paul*, whether he ſhould deſire to live or dye; by living he might do great ſervice to the Church; and therefore he was very well contented to live; but if he departed, he ſhould be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all: *For I am in a ſtrait between two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better: Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you*, 1. Phil. 23, 24. And it is univerſally pronounced, *Bleſſed are the dead which dye in the Lord, from henceforth: Ye, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works follow them*, 14. Rev. 13. This evidently proves, that Good men ſhall be happy as ſoon as they dye; and beſides the expreſs Authority of our Saviour in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, the reaſon of the thing proves, that Bad men muſt be miſerable; that as the Happineſs of Good men commences with their death, ſo muſt the Miſeries of the Wicked.

Bad men indeed many times live very happily in this world, for this is the time of God's Patience, while he waits to be gracious, *not being willing any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance:* But the Day of Grace ends with this Life; the next World is for Retributions; we muſt there receive according to our works: And therefore though we ſhould ſuppoſe that the perfect Rewards of Good men, and the perfect Miſeries of the Wicked, ſhould be

be deferred till the Day of Judgment, when the Final Sentence ſhall be pronounced, which ſhall beſtow Heaven upon Good men, and condemn the Wicked to Hell, yet the puniſhment of Bad men muſt begin when they leave this world, becauſe God's Patience is then at an end; and the Rewards of Good men muſt begin too, becauſe their Work and Labour is at an end. And this has been the univerſal belief of Mankind, who have believed a Future ſtate; though they knew nothing of a General Judgment, when all Mankind ſhould be ſummoned before God's Tribunal, yet they all believed, that when Bad men died, they immediately went to a place of Puniſhment, and Good men to *Elyſium*, a place of Reſt and Happineſs: For if we ſhall be Rewarded and Puniſhed in the next world, for what we have done in this, it is natural and reaſonable to think, that our Rewards and Puniſhments ſhall begin as ſoon as we go into the next world.

2. And yet we read of no other Formal Judgment, but that Great and General Judgment, when the Son of Man ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a glorious Retinue of Angels to judge the World: If we examine all thoſe expreſs Declarations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles concerning Judgment; or thoſe Parables of our Saviour which relate to it, we ſhall plainly find, that they concern the Laſt and General Judgment: It is *in that Day*, which relates to a certain determined Day of Judgment, that *many ſhall ſay unto him, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name?* 7. Matth. 22.

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It is at the end of the World, when the Angels ſhall ſeparate between the Wheat and the Tares, between the good and bad Fiſh which were taken in the ſame Net, 13. *Matth.* It is *when the ſon of man ſhall come in the glory of his father, with his angels, that he ſhall reward every man according to his works*, 16. Matth. 27. that is, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, when *the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Theſ. 8. 9. *God has given him authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the ſon of man.* And when he muſt do this, he tells us, *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good; to the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the reſurrection of damnation*, 5. John 27, 28, 29. And in his account of his judging the world, he tells us, *When the ſon of man ſhall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd ſeparateth the ſheep from the goats*, 25. Matth. 31, 32. Then it is, when the man who travelled into a far Countrey returns, and calls his Servants to an account how they have improved their Talents, *verſe* 14, *&c.*

Chriſt is the only Judge of the World, for all Judgment is committed to the Son; and he does not Judge the World till his ſecond Appearance, till he returns in the Glory of his Father, with

with his *Angels*. The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* indeed tells us, *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment*; which might ſeem to intimate a particular Judgment of all men as ſoon as they die; but he adds when this Judgment ſhall be, in the next Verſe, *So Chriſt was once offered to bear the Sins of many*; he died once for us, becauſe we muſt once die; *and unto them that look for him, ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without Sin unto Salvation*: That is, he ſhall appear the ſecond time to judge the World; which ſhews that this Judgment after Death, is the General Judgment, 9. *Heb.* 27, 28.

And the truth is, if all men have a final Sentence paſt on them, as ſoon as they go into the other Word, it is very unaccountable, why Chriſt at the laſt Day ſhall come with ſuch a terrible Pomp and Solemnity to Judge and Condemn thoſe who are judged, and condemned, and executed already, as much as ever they can be.

And therefore in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, we have no mention of their being judged; but *Lazarus* was carried by an Angel into *Abraham*'s Boſom; the Angels being *miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of Salvation*, 1. Heb. 14. Thus they miniſter to good Men in this World, and do a great many kind Offices for us, which we know not of; and thus they miniſter to us when we go out of this World, and conduct us to a place of Eaſe

Eaſe and Reſt; carry us ſafe through the Crowds of evil Spirits which fill theſe lower Regions, *into Abraham's boſom*: but the *rich man was dead and buried, and lift up his eyes in Hell*, or *Hades*, (not *Gehennah*) which ſignifies the State of Separate Souls, and it ſeems of wicked Souls, and was in Torment; but how he came thither, it is not ſaid: there is no notice given us of any Judgment which ſat on him, or who carried him thither; and therefore if we may gueſs by the Analogy of the Parable, as *Lazarus* was carried by an Angel into *Abraham's* Boſom, ſo *Dives* having no good Angel to guard him, fell into the hands of wicked Spirits; for the Devil is the Prince of the Power of the Air, the great Tempter of men while they live, and their Tormentor when they die; whoever is ſo far rejected by God, as to be delivered up to the Power of wicked Spirits, without any reſtraint in their Malice and Cruelty, as wicked men are, when they die, need no other Puniſhment till the Day of Judgment, when they together with the Devil and his Angels ſhall be caſt into utter Darkneſs, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth for evermore: We know what cruel Tyranny the Devil exerciſed upon the Pagan World, who ſo devoutly worſhipped him; and what then muſt the Caſe be of thoſe wretched Souls, who are delivered to him by God as their Jaylor and Tormentor, till the Day of Judgment? I will not ſay this is the caſe, though it ſeems no improbable Account of it;

it; but if it be (and thus it may be, before Chriſt comes to judge the World), you muſt all confeſs, That to have the Devil for our Tormentor, is the very next degree to being tormented with the Devil and his Angels.

But yet this is not a Final Judgment, the Laſt Sentence is not pronounced againſt them; and though I doubt not but moſt bad men as certainly know what their Doom will be, as the Devils themſelves do; yet there is reaſon to think, that ſome bad men (as bad men, we ſee, are very apt to flatter themſelves with vain Hopes in this world, and may do ſo in the next, for ought we know) are ſtill in hopes of finding Mercy at the Day of Judgment, when Chriſt comes to judge the World: For if they knew themſelves under a Final and Irreverſible Sentence, there can be no account given, why at the Laſt Day they ſhould put in any Plea for themſelves, or ſue for Mercy; and yet thus our Saviour repreſents it: *In that day many will ſay unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work iniquity*, 7. Matth. 22, 23.

And thus in the Deſcription of the Laſt Judgment, when he ſhall ſay to them on the Left Hand, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave*

me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye cloathed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Then ſhall they anſwer him, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or a-thirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? 25. Matth. 41, 42, 43, 44. Now it is not imaginable, that theſe men at the Laſt Day of Judgment ſhould make any of theſe Pleas, had they been judged, and condemned, and the Final Sentence paſſed on them before.

The Sum is this; That Mankind ſhall not be finally judged till Chriſt comes to judge the World; but yet good men are in a State of Happineſs, and bad men in a State of Puniſhment and Miſery: That very good men, as they are happy at preſent, ſo they have the joyful Expectations of the Day of Judgment, when they ſhall be finally rewarded, and received into the immediate Preſence of God in Heaven; and that very bad men, beſides the Miſeries which they at preſent ſuffer, have the terrible Proſpect of a Future Judgment, when they know they ſhall be condemned to endleſs Miſeries.

3. There is this farther to be added, That according to that Account the Scripture gives us of this matter, though Bad men ſhall be miſerable, and Good men happy, as ſoon as they go out of theſe Bodies; yet Bad men ſhall not be condemned to Hell, nor Good men received into Heaven, till the Day of Judgment. There is no great difficulty in proving this, ſince the Rewards of Good

Good men, and the Puniſhments of the Wicked, that is, their Final Rewards and Puniſhments, or Heaven and Hell, are throughout the New Teſtament referred to the Day of Judgment: This our Saviour expreſly tells us, 13. Matth. 41, 42, 43. *The ſon of man ſhall ſend forth his angels*, (that is, at the end of the World, *v.* 39.) *and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which work iniquity; and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth like the Sun in the kingdom of their father.* But there is no need of any other Proof of this, but that at the Day of Judgment Good men ſhall be received into Heaven, and Bad men condemned to Hell, 25. *Matth.* And if Good men were in Heaven before, it is very ſtrange that they ſhould be brought out of Heaven to be judged, and to be received into Heaven again with greater Authority and Solemnity; and if Bad men were in Hell before, it ſeems as ſtrange, that they ſhould be fetched out of Hell, to be more ſolemnly condemned thither again: This would be thought a very odd kind of Proceeding among men; and we have no reaſon to ſuſpect this of GOD's Judgment.

As for Bad men, they are to be caſt into the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; and therefore it is not likely they ſhould be caſt into this Fire before the Devil himſelf is; and yet the Scripture aſſures us, That at preſent he is *the Prince of*

the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience, 2. Epheſ. 2. And St. *Peter* tells us, That *God ſpared not theſe angels that ſinned, but caſt them down into hell, and delivered them into the chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. Which is very ill tranſlated; for if they were caſt down into Hell, how are they reſerved for the Day of Judgment? For what worſe Judgment can they undergo, than to be caſt into Hell? But the words are σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας, caſting them down into Chains of Darkneſs, for ſo ταρταροῦν ſignifies only to caſt down; that is, thoſe Angels who formerly inhabited the Æthereal Regions, where there was perpetual Light, were for their Sin caſt down into this darkſome Region of Air, where the cleareſt Light is Smoke and Darkneſs, in compariſon with thoſe brighter Regions from whence they fell (for the Devil is the Prince of the Power of the Air); and they are called *Chains of Darkneſs*, becauſe by the Decree of God they can go no farther, cannot aſcend higher to thoſe Regions of Light again; and here they are reſerved till the Judgment of the Laſt Day.

While our Saviour was on Earth, it is plain that theſe Evil Spirits were not confined to Hell, for they poſſeſſed the Bodies of men, and very much complained that Chriſt came to torment them before their time, 8. *Matth.* 29. They knew, it ſeems, there was a time of Torment appointed for them, but it was not yet: And yet there was then ſome place of Confinement for them,

them, which is the ἄβυσσος, or Deep, whatever that ſignifies, whither they were unwilling to go: And therefore when Chriſt caſt them out of the man whom they had long and furiouſly poſſeſſed, they beg of him, that he would not command them *to go into the deep*, 8. Luke 31.

I ſhall only obſerve farther, that the Devils are ſaid *to Believe and Tremble*: Now what is it they believe, and what is it they tremble at, but the Laſt Judgment, and that terrible Condemnation which they then expect? And therefore they are not under it yet; for Faith reſpects what is abſent and future, and Fear does not reſpect what we ſuffer at preſent, but what we expect.

But theſe are great Myſteries, which we cannot now underſtand; but thus much we do underſtand, That if theſe Fallen and Apoſtate Angels have not yet received their Final Puniſhment, but are only reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs till the Judgment of the Great Day, there is leſs reaſon to think that wicked men, who are to be puniſhed with the Devil and his Angels, ſhould immediately go to Hell, as ſoon as they go out of theſe Bodies: And therefore whatever is meant by thoſe Flames wherein *Dives* was tormented, it is not the laſt Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

As for Good men, thoſe Expreſſions of Scripture, of their going to Paradiſe, eſpecially of their *going to Chriſt, or being preſent with the Lord*, ſeem to bid very

fair for their going directly to Heaven, where Christ is; but the Primitive Christians understood them otherwise: That *Paradise*, and *Abraham*'s Bosom was a Place of Ease and Happiness, but not Heaven; that no man ascends into Heaven till after the Resurrection; which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* prove from the Example of Christ, to which we must be conformed; for Christ himself did not ascend into Heaven till after the Resurrection; but as his Body rested in the Grave, so his Soul went into the State of Souls departed; and when he arose again, then he ascended into Heaven; and thus they say we must do also. When we dye, our Souls shall live in those Places which God has prepared for separate Souls; and when we have reassumed our Bodies, we shall be admitted into the highest Heavens, whither Christ is ascended: And this seems very reasonable, that we should not ascend into Heaven, into the immediate Presence of God, which signifies our perfect Reconciliation to him, without our Bodies; the want of which is an Argument of *our* Apostacy, and *his* Displeasure; and all the Marks of his Displeasure ought to be removed, before we appear in his immediate Presence. But is not Christ in Heaven? and how then can good men *be present with the Lord* after Death, if they do not immediately ascend into Heaven? Now as for this they tell us, That the Souls of Just Men in *Paradise* have the Sight and Conversation of Angels and Archangels, and the Vision, or ἐπόπτεια, of our Saviour, which, they think, is what is meant by being

ing preſent with the Lord; though they did not affirm that no Good men did immediately aſcend into Heaven when they died; but expreſly taught that all Martyrs did, who died for the Name and Religion of Chriſt: And this was the thing which made them in that Age ſo fond of Martyrdom, that they thought all Martyrs aſcended directly into Heaven: And if they could have proved this, as it is plain they believed it, that Martyrs did immediately aſcend into Heaven, and that other Chriſtians did not, who would not have coveted to dye a Martyr?

Thus I have very fairly and truly repreſented this matter: And that no man who has not ſo carefully conſidered this, may take offence at it, I ſhall 1. ſhew you how uſeful this Doctrine is at this time. And 2. That it gives no Diſcouragement to Virtue, nor any Encouragement to Vice.

1*ſt*. As for the firſt, we may conſider in the firſt place, That in ſuch an Age as this, wherein we have to deal with ſo many Atheiſts and Infidels, we ought to take care to make Religion reaſonable and intelligible; for if we do not, they expoſe it to Scorn and Ridicule, and both harden themſelves in their own Infidelity, and corrupt others; and therefore we muſt take care not to repreſent any thing abſurdly and inconſiſtently: Now to ſay that men who are already judged, and either condemned or abſolved, and actually ſent to Hell or to Heaven, ſhould be ſolemnly judged over again, and condemned a-

gain to Hell, or advanced to Heaven, ſounds oddly to ſuch men; but if the Scripture does not expreſly teach ſuch a Doctrine, we are at liberty not to teach it, eſpecially if we can give another account of it, which ſeems as agreeable to Scripture, and more agreeable to the Reaſon and Underſtanding of mankind.

2. Some there are, who obſerving that Mankind ſhall not be judged till the Day of Judgment, conclude that there is no intermediate ſtate, but that the Soul ſleeps with the Body till the Day of Judgment. A very Fooliſh and Unphiloſophical Opinion; for we may as reaſonably think that the Soul dies, as that it ſleeps in a ſtate of Separation: If the Soul be a Spiritual Subſtance, diſtinct from the Body, it may live and act without it; and it is as eaſy and reaſonable to defend the Mortality of the Soul, as its ſleeping; for if the Soul muſt ſleep when it is ſeparated from the Body, it muſt ſleep for ever, if it never be reunited to the Body again; that is, it muſt live and dye with the Body; for ſuch a ſleep as this is not merely an Image of Death, but Death it ſelf. But from what I have now diſcourſed, it appears, That though there be a great diſtance between Death and Judgment, yet the Soul does live and act; is happy or miſerable in the mean time.

3. This Notion does very great ſervice alſo againſt Popery: For 1. It gives an account of a Middle State, without Purgatory. This has greatly impoſed upon Unlearned Men, that the Advocates of Popery have proved

from

from the Ancient Fathers, that they owned a Middle State, which was neither Heaven nor Hell; and then preſently conclude, That this muſt be Purgatory. Now it is very true, the Ancient Chriſtians did own a Middle State between Death and Judgment, which was neither Heaven nor Hell, but yet never dreamt of a Popiſh Purgatory: They believed Bad men were in a ſtate of Puniſhment as ſoon as they left theſe Bodies, but not in Hell; and that Good men were in a ſtate of Reſt and Happineſs, but not in Heaven; but they never thought of a Place of Torment to expiate the Temporal Puniſhment due to Sin, when the Eternal Puniſhment is remitted, which is the Popiſh Purgatory, and the moſt Barbarous Repreſentation of the Chriſtian Religion, though the moſt Profitable too, to the Church of *Rome*, that ever was invented.

2. This utterly overthrows the Worſhip of Saints in the Church of *Rome*; at leaſt, of all Saints who were not Martyrs; for Saint-worſhip is founded on this Belief, That theſe Saints when they dye are received into Heaven, into the immediate Preſence of God, and therefore can there powerfully intercede for us; but if theſe Saints are not yet received into Heaven, nor ſhall be till the Reſurrection, which was the Faith of the Primitive Chriſtians, and ſeems very agreeable to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as I have now ſhewn you; then there is an end of the Worſhip and Interceſſion of Saints.

2*dly*.

2*dly*. This Doctrine neither discourages Virtue, nor encourages Vice: I cannot indeed say, but that Heaven is a much happier Place than Paradise, and therefore it is more desirable for Good men when they dye, to go directly to Heaven, than to Paradise: but yet it is a sufficient Encouragement to the exercise of the most perfect Virtues, that as soon as we dye, we shall be carried by Angels into *Abraham*'s *Bosom*, or into *Paradise*; a Place of perfect Ease and Rest, and as perfect Happiness as can be enjoyed out of Heaven. Such a Paradise where Holy Souls dwell, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Confessors, with Heaven at the end of it, is a sufficient, an abundant Reward for all the most difficult and laborious Services of this Life: That Heaven is not yet, is no greater Discouragement, than that we shall not rise from the dead till the Day of Judgment, that we shall not have our Bodies again till they are awakened by the Last Trumpet; Bodies which will be bright and glorious as the Sun, which will rise with Eternal Youth, and Strength, and Beauty: This is a much greater Happiness, than to live either in Paradise or in Heaven, without our Bodies; but this we must stay for, and so we may for Heaven; and we may be very well contented to wait for Heaven, and for the Resurrection of our Bodies *in Paradise*: When we are as happy as Paradise can make us, we may very patiently expect the full Completion of our Happiness in the Resurrection of our Bodies, and our Admission into the

the higheſt Heavens, to the immediate Throne and Preſence of God.

Thus though Hell is a Place of the moſt perfect Torment and Miſery, for it is the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, and therefore it is much more formidable for Sinners to drop immediately into Hell when they dye, than to ſuffer any other ſtate of Puniſhment between Death and Judgment; yet he is a very unreaſonable man, who does not think the Day of Judgment time enough to be condemned to Hell, and who does not think it miſery enough to fall under the Power of Evil Spirits in the mean time: If God thinks this Puniſhment enough, methinks Sinners ſhould; and thoſe who cannot fear Hell at the diſtance of the Day of Judgment, will not fear Hell, though it were no farther off than Death. Thoſe who are not afraid of being tormented as *Dives* was, when they go out of theſe Bodies, will not fear Hell, though we allow Hell to be a ſtate of more perfect Miſery. I am ſure *Dives* thought thoſe Torments ſo great, that they were ſufficient to have made his Brethren true Penitents, had they known what they muſt ſuffer for their Sins as ſoon as they dye: And thoſe who will not allow that Bad men are immediately condemned to Hell as ſoon as they dye, yet muſt allow that they may be tormented as *Dives* was. In ſhort, if Wicked men do not drop into Hell as ſoon as they dye, yet they ſhall be condemned to Hell at the Day of Judgment; and in the Intermediate State between Death and Judgment, ſhall ſuffer all thoſe unknown

known Miseries which are prepared for wicked Souls till the Day of Judgment; and those who will not be perswaded by this, will live and dye in their Sins, though you could convince them that they shall drop into Hell as soon as they dye.

SECT. II.

That the Day of Judgment is appointed.

HAVING thus considered the State between Death and Judgment, let us now more strictly consider the Time of Judgment: And here are several things to be observed and explained:

I. That the Day of Judgment is appointed: *He hath appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World.*

II. That this is a General Day for the Judgment of the whole World.

III. That this Day of Judgment will be at the End of the World.

I. That the Day of Judgment is appointed: *He hath appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World.*

This is a matter of pure Revelation, and can be known no other way; for though we have great Evidence from Reason, that God

God will judge the World, yet to appoint a Day is a free Act of God's Wiſdom and Counſel; and this muſt be learnt from Revelation; and we cannot have a more expreſs Revelation for any thing, than we have for this; for St. *Paul* tells us in plain words, that God hath appointed a Day to judge the World: And our Saviour in expreſs words ſeveral times refers to this Day, as appointed and determined by God: *In that day many ſhall ſay unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name?* which refers to ſome certain Day, 7. *Matth.* 22. *And the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice,* 5. John 28. And *of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only,* 24. Matth. 36. which plainly ſignifies that the Day is determined and fixed, becauſe God knows when it ſhall be; that is, he knows when he has appointed it: And if it were not appointed, it had been no great wonder that neither Men nor Angels know it.

Now this Conſideration, that God hath *appointed* a Day wherein he will judge the World, is not without its uſe: For,

1*ſt*. This proves the Certainty of a Future Judgment, that the Day of Judgment is appointed: For we cannot think that God would appoint a Day to judge the World, unleſs he abſolutely reſolved to judge it.

2*dly*. This anſwers the Objection againſt a Future Judgment, from the long Delays of it. This St. *Peter* tells us would be a great Objection in the laſt days, or towards the end of the World, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4. *Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*: That is, conſider how old the World now is, and how long Mankind have been frighten'd with the Fears of Judgment: Many Ages and ſucceſſive Generations have lived in expectation of it, but it is not yet, nor any more ſigns of it, than when the World was firſt made; and ſince it has been ſo long expected to no purpoſe, it is time to deſpiſe ſuch vain and groundleſs Fears.

This ought to be plainly and fully ſtated; for we live in the laſt days, and have many of theſe Scoffers already among us.

1. But if GOD have appointed the Day of Judgment, it is a very fooliſh Argument, to ſay, That he will not judge the World, becauſe he has not done it yet, unleſs we could prove that the Day appointed for Judgment is already paſt. God cannot be ſaid to delay to judge the World, when the Time he has appointed for Judgment is not yet come; for to delay doing any thing, is not to do it in its proper ſeaſon, when it is time to do it; or when we reſolved and determined

determined to do it: And therefore no man can ſay that God delays to judge the World, unleſs he could tell what Day God in his own Infinite Wiſdom appointed for Judgment. For,

2. That God appoints a long Day for Judgment, is no Argument that he will not judge us.

Thus it was in the Deſtruction of the Old World, a great while before God brought that Univerſal Deluge on them, but it came at laſt, and ſwept them all away; as St. *Peter* obſerves, *For this they willingly were ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflow'd with water, periſhed.* This General Deſtruction of the Old World by Water, is reaſon enough to believe God when he threatens to deſtroy it again by Fire; *For the heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men*, 5, 6, 7. It was a great while before God deſtroyed the Old World; and though this ſecond Deſtruction by Fire is deferred much longer, it will come in its appointed time. 2 Pet. 3. 5, 6.

3. For what ſeems a very long time to us, is not ſo to God, as the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *One day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.* God is not affected with the Succeſſion of Time, nor its lingring delays; and

and therefore is not in haſte to judge this World before the World is ripe for Judgment; and when that is, he himſelf knows beſt.

For to appoint a Day to judge the World, is a Work of great Wiſdom and Counſel: Before God judges the World, it is fit for him to diſplay all the various Scenes of Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Power, and Juſtice in the Government of the World; to exerciſe great Patience towards Sinners, and to make the utmoſt Experiments to reform them, as St. *Peter* tells us, *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, (as ſome men count ſlackneſs) but is patient to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, verſe 9.

4. When God finally judges the World, he deſtroys this preſent Frame of Things, as it follows in the next Verſe, *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.* Now it does not become a wiſe and a good God, to be haſty in deſtroying a World that he has made.

And therefore to reconcile God's deſtroying the World with his Eſſential Attributes of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, there are two things neceſſary:

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1*ſt*. The incorrigible Wickedneſs of Mankind. A wiſe man will not immediately pull down a Houſe he has built, till he diſcovers ſome irreparable decays in it: Thus God juſtifies his Deſtruction of the Old World, from the Univerſal Corruption of Manners, and the incurable Wickedneſs of it: *God ſaw the wickedneſs of man, that it was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth*, 6. Gen. 5, 6, 7. And this was the only reaſon that could be given, to juſtify ſo univerſal a Deſtruction of Mankind, that they were univerſally wicked, excepting one righteous Family, which God preſerved: And it ſeems very probable, that the general ſtate of the World will be very wicked and corrupt before the final Deſtruction of the World by Fire; for we can conceive no other reaſon why God ſhould finally deſtroy this World, but to put an end to the incurable Wickedneſs of men. And this is the account the Scripture gives us of it; we find every where a deplorable Deſcription of the Wickedneſs of the laſt days; *In the laſt days perilous times ſhall come: For men* (that is, the generality of Mankind) *ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers,*

diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, traytors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God; having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Thus St. *Jude* tells us, *There ſhall be mockers in the laſt times, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts*, verſe 18. And St. *Peter*, as you heard, that *in the laſt days there ſhall be ſcoffers, ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming?* And our Saviour himſelf plainly intimates what an univerſal Decay there ſhall be of Piety and Faith, when he comes to judge the World, *Nevertheleſs when the ſon of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?* 18. *Luke* 8. Atheiſm and Infidelity ſhall greatly prevail in the World before the Day of Judgment; and by this, as St. *John* ſaid long ſince, *We know that is the laſt time.* And this is one of the ſigns both of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and of the Day of Judgment; *Then ſhall many be offended, and ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another: And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall deceive many. And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold. But he that ſhall endure to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, 24. Matth. 10, 11, 12, 13.

And therefore the Deſtruction of this World by Fire, which is the Preparation to the Final Judgment, is repreſented as an immediate Vengeance on the Wickedneſs of that

that Generation of men, who ſhall then be living on the Earth; though at the ſame time, the Dead ſhall be raiſed, and all ungodly men involved in the ſame ruin. *The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Theſ. 1. 8. And 10. *Heb.* 27. it is called *a fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.*

So that one thing God has regard to in appointing the Day of Judgment, is, Not to deſtroy the World till the Wickedneſs of Mankind is grown incurable, and paſt Remedy; and till this is the ſtate of the World, how much Wickedneſs ſoever there be in it, it is too ſoon for a Wiſe and Good God to deſtroy the World he made: But there ſeems, 2. To be ſomething more than this, to juſtify the Final Deſtruction of the World; not only that the preſent Race of Mankind is ſo univerſally corrupt, that they deſerve to be univerſally deſtroyed, which was the caſe of the Old World, wherein there was but one Righteous Family; but that Mankind is thus incurably wicked after all the wiſe Methods of God's Grace and Providence to reform the World; for then it is time to put a Final End to the ſtate of this World, and to the farther Propagation of Mankind on it, and to ſummon all men to Judgment, to receive according to their Works.

This ſeems to be the reaſon why *Noah's* Flood did not put a final end to the World, and why God did not at that time call all Mankind to Judgment; becauſe though the Wickedneſs of that Generation of men was ſo univerſal and ſo incurable, that it juſtified their univerſal deſtruction, yet God had new Methods of Grace, and hidden Treaſures of Wiſdom, in reſerve for the reforming the World: And therefore though he purged the earth from its wicked Inhabitants, he did not think fit to put an end to the Race of Men, but preſerved *Noah* and his Sons in the Ark (which was the only Righteous Family then living) to propagate a new Generation of men, whom he would try with new Methods of Grace; the laſt, and moſt admirable, and moſt effectual Method of Grace was reſerved for the laſt Times; the Myſterious Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Power of Goſpel-Grace. And when this alſo ſhall have loſt its effect; when Atheiſm and Infidelity, and all manner of Wickedneſs ſhall prevail; when the Church it ſelf ſhall be over-run with Hereſies, Schiſms, and a mere external Form of Religion, without the Power of it; when men ſhall walk after their own Luſts; when Faith ſhall fail, Iniquity abound, and the Love of many wax cold, then the end is at hand; God has then tried what Mankind will prove, long enough, and it is time to put a Period to this World, and to the Race of Mankind, and call them all to Judgment:

Judgment. If what ſome Learned Men teach be true, That the Letters St. *John* was commanded to write to the Seven Churches of *Aſia*, were Prophetick of the Seven different ſtates of the Chriſtian Church, from the time of Chriſt, till the end of the World, we find that the very laſt ſtate of the Church, when Chriſt will *ſpew her out of his mouth*; that is, when he will put a final end to the Church on earth, is repreſented by the Church of *Laodicea*, 3. Rev. 14, &c. *And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, Theſe things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; ſo then, becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpew thee out of my mouth.* When a true Zeal and Concernment for the Faith and Practice of Chriſtianity fails in the Church, and Atheiſm, and Infidelity, and all manner of Wickedneſs prevails in the World, theſe are Preſages of the near approach of a final Judgment.

Now if this be a fair and reaſonable account of the Deſtruction of the World, and a Future Judgment, we need not wonder that God has appointed ſo late a Day for it: Seven or Eight thouſand Years is no long time for the duration of the World; eſpecially when we have had ſuch a terrible Example of God's Juſtice and Vengeance, in the deſtruction of the Old World already.

We have reaſon to believe that this World ſhould never have been deſtroyed, but for the incurable Wickedneſs of Mankind; for nothing elſe can juſtify the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in deſtroying what he had made: God could have judged, and rewarded or puniſhed particular men, without deſtroying the World; but when Mankind is grown univerſally and incurably wicked, it does not become God to ſuffer this Earth to be an eternal Nurſery of Atheiſts and Rebels againſt the Majeſty of Heaven; and this makes it neceſſary for God to deſtroy it; but then the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God requires that this ſhould be done with great Patience and Long-ſuffering, and after the diſappointment of all the wiſe Methods of his Grace in reforming the World; and then no man can ſay that God has hitherto too long delayed the Final Judgment; ſome Thouſand years is no long Trial to ſave the World and Mankind whom he hath made, from Final Deſtruction.

(1.) And therefore let no man laugh at a Future Judgment, and Final Deſtruction of this World, as if it would never be, becauſe it is not yet; God is in no haſte to deſtroy the World; but when he ſees it ripe for Deſtruction, that is the Day he has appointed for Judgment: Such Scoffers as theſe are certain Fore-runners of that Day; and unleſs there be ſtill a new reſurrection of true Faith and Piety, (which we hope for) it cannot be far off:

off: How long ſoever ſuch men may think God delays, yet *their judgment lingreth not, and their damnation ſlumbreth not*, 2 Pet. 2. 3. Let us all remember what our Saviour tells us, *If that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and ſhall cut him aſunder, and ſhall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*, 24. Matth. 48.

It is no Argument that Judgment is a great way off, becauſe men are ſecure, and can laugh at the thoughts of it; for the more ſecure the World is, the nearer it is to Judgment: The very Day that Judgment ſhall overtake them, they ſhall leaſt of all think of it, as it muſt needs be when the World ſhall be ſo over-run with Atheiſm and Infidelity; and therefore the Day of Judgment is ſaid *to come like a thief in the night*, that is, ſuddenly, and by ſurprize, when we are aſleep, and ſecure, and leaſt ſuſpect it, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 2, 4. 2 *Peter* 3. 10. As Chriſt threatens the Church of *Sardis*, 3. *Revel.* 3. *If therefore thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.* Thus 24. *Matth.* 37, *&c.* Chriſt tells us that the Day of Judgment, or *the coming of the ſon of man, is like the days of Noah. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking,*

marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entred into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. The like we have, 17. *Luke* 26, 27. to which he adds the destruction of *Sodom*; *Likewise also it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even thus it shall be in the day when the Son of man is revealed*, 28, 29, 30.

(2.) This exactly agrees with what I have now discourſed, That God will not destroy the World till the Wickedneſs of Mankind is almoſt universal and incurable; for if this be true, God cannot destroy the World till men are ſecure and fearleſs of Judgment; that is, till they are ſuch Atheiſts and Infidels, ſo immers'd in ſenſual Pleaſures, ſo given up to a Reprobate Senſe, that they have no thoughts of God and another World, nor any concernment for a Future Judgment.

Till the generality of mankind are come to this ſecure ſtate, they are not ſo hopeleſs, nor ſo outrageouſly and irrecoverably wicked, as to provoke God to a final deſtruction of the World: A ſenſe of God, and the fear of Judgment will reſtrain the wickedneſs of mankind, and make them more modeſt and cautious, give check to their Vices, alarm and awaken their Conſciences whether they will or no; while this ſenſe and belief is preſerved in the world,

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there muſt be a great many good men, and a great many more who pretend to Piety and Virtue: And though there may be here and there an Atheiſt among them, this is not conſiderable; this does not make the ſtate of Mankind hopeleſs and deſperate; and does not come up to the deſcription of thoſe times when God will deſtroy and judge the World.

And to obſerve this by the way; this is the true account why the Judgments of God in this world, either upon Private Perſons or Publick Societies, Kingdoms, and Nations, ſurprize men when they are moſt ſecure, and think leaſt of Judgment; when as the Prophet *Jeremy* ſpeaks, *They cry peace, peace, when there is no peace*, 6. Jer. 14. I need not tell you that this is not to take us at an advantage, as a weak Enemy ſometimes does, who wants ſtrength and power to hurt us, but upon a ſurprize; for no ſinner, all the ſinners of the world cannot reſiſt God's Power, though they had never ſo much warning to make their defence.

Nor is it that God takes ſo much pleaſure in puniſhing us, and in executing his Judgments upon the world, that he will give us no warning of it, that we may not prevent it by a timely Repentance, and make our Peace with him; for he is infinitely good and merciful; he delights to do good, and to ſhew mercy, but Judgment is his ſtrange work; and he has ſufficiently denounced his Judgments againſt incorrigible ſinners, if they would believe him, and take warning by it.

But

But the reason why the Judgments of God so often surprize men in their Security, while they are asleep, and dreaming of nothing but what is prosperous and happy, of the return of *Astræa* and the Golden Age, is because their sins, which make them ripe for Judgment, and will not suffer God to stay his hand any longer, have made them also secure: Either they have sinned away all Belief of God, and his Providence, and a Future Judgment; or have sinned away the sense of those particular Sins which they are guilty of; or to make themselves secure, they have by the help of Enthusiasm and Superstition, reconciled the hopes of Heaven, and the sense of God's love and favour, with the practice of the most provoking Impieties: That is, their love to Sin has made them secure, and then there is little hope that they will ever forsake their sins; and this makes them very fit to be the Examples of God's Justice and Displeasure.

And the same account is to be given of the Day of Judgment: It will surprize men as a Thief in the Night; not because they never heard that God would judge the World; for God has sufficiently declared this, and given us timely notice to prepare for it; but men will at that time have sinned away the belief of a God, and of a Judgment to come, or have laid this belief asleep with some intoxicating Superstitions and Formalities; and this is so hopeless and irrecoverable a state, that it makes it time for God to judge the World.

(3.) And

3. And this may give ſome probable account both why the Day of Judgment is deferred ſo long, as ſome men are apt to ſpeak (though God knows they have little reaſon to think it long, conſidering what Account they are able to give, and what Sentence they are like to receive) and why the particular time of Judgment is concealed from us.

While the ſenſe of Judgment continues in the World, it muſt make a great many good men, and reſtrain the Wickedneſs and Impiety of bad men, and as you have heard, God will not deſtroy the World while it is in an hopeful and recoverable ſtate; but the long delay of Judgment (as men are apt to call it) wears off the ſenſe and belief of it, and then men grow wicked without fear and reſtraint; and then it is time for God to judge the World.

Thus if God fixes and determines the Day of Judgment, upon the foreſight of ſuch a General Impiety as will deſerve a final exciſion, God cannot reveal this to the World: For one would think it impoſſible, did the World know this beforehand, but the Age of Judgment ſhould be the moſt Devout and Religious Age that ever had been from the beginning of the World; and then that would not be a fit time to deſtroy the World; and God could not foreſee it the propereſt time of Judgment.

It is abundantly ſufficient that God gives us all reaſonable evidence and aſſurance that he will judge the World; but there is no reaſon to tell

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us at what particular time he will judge the World; nay, it is not fitting that we should know it.

Had men known some thousand years ago, how long the Day of Judgment should be deferred, it had so much weakned the Argument of a Future Judgment, by removing it a great way off, that the World might much better have deserved to be destroyed at any other time, than in likelihood it would do, if men certainly knew the time when the Day of Judgment comes: And if the general belief of Judgment will not make us good men, it is not fit that we should certainly know the time of Judgment, no more than that we should know the time of our Death, or be converted by a sight of Heaven or Hell.

God reserves this as a Secret in his own Breast, which neither Men nor Angels shall know; which is the best way to make the Belief of a Future Judgment effectual upon all Ages of the World, especially since that express Revelation which the Gospel has made of it. This Instruction our Saviour himself gives us, That since we know not the Day of Judgment, we should always watch, and be ready prepared for it. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come: But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up; therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh,* 24. Matth.

24. Matth. 42, 43, 44. And if this was good Advice in our Saviour's days, it more nearly concerns us, on whom the end of the World is come.

(4.) There is one thing more I ſhall obſerve from this Diſcourſe, Not to be offended, though you ſee Atheiſm and Infidelity prevail in the World, and the true Chriſtian Faith begin to fail, and the love of many wax cold: Thus it muſt be towards the end of the World; and if we now ſee the beginnings of it, it is no great wonder.

This is indeed a great Temptation to men who are governed by Examples, to hear the firſt Principles of Religion called in queſtion, and the great Fundamental Articles of our Faith made matter of Diſpute and Controverſy; nay, the plaineſt Rules of Life ridiculed and exploded; but if theſe things ſhould not be, the World would never come to an end: God cannot deſtroy a believing and righteous Nation, much leſs a righteous World, a World of Believers and Saints. And if it be our Portion to fall into the Dregs of Time, into theſe laſt days, when there ſhall be Scoffers walking after their own ungodly Luſts, let us conſider that this is no more than was foretold; thus it muſt be towards the end of the World; and therefore this ought not to weaken the Credit of Religion, no more than the fulfilling of Prophecies does: Let us remember how Sacred this Faith has been for Sixteen hundred Years; how many Martyrs and Confeſſors it has had; how God has preſerved

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it againſt all the Powers and Oppoſition of the World; how it has triumph'd over Pagan Idolatries, and which is more than that, triumph'd over the Luſts and Vices of the World, in the exemplary Self-denial, Mortification, and Divine and Heavenly Converſations of its Profeſſors: And this I think is ſuch an Argument of its Divinity, as may defend us againſt the Wit, and Raillery, and Impudence of profeſs'd Atheiſts and Debauchees, who till of late have themſelves been the Scorn and Deriſion of Mankind.

SECT. III.

The Day God has appointed, is a General Day of Judgment.

II. THIS Day God has appointed, is a General Day of Judgment, or a Day to Judge the whole World: All Mankind ſhall be ſummoned before the Tribunal of Chriſt, and be tried, and condemned or acquitted in the General Aſſembly of Men and Angels.

What an amazing ſight will this be! to ſee all Mankind ſtart out of their Graves, and appear before their Judge: To have one View of the whole Race of Men, of all ſucceſſive Generations from *Adam* to the end of the World. Such an Aſſembly as never was before, never will be till that day, and never will be after it: Could we look on as unconcerned Spectators at that day, what an Enter-

Entertainment would here be, only to ſee all Mankind together; all the Men of Name and Renown, whoſe Fame is recorded in Story, who have ſignaliz'd themſelves in their ſeveral Ages by their Piety and Virtue, and Wiſdom and Valour; or it may be by their Vices; but this will be no time to gratify our Curioſity, when we all meet to receive our Final Doom.

It more concerns us at preſent to draw another Scene of Things, and to imagine how differently men will appear at the Day of Judgment, from what they do in this World. We ſhall ſee all Mankind together riſe with their own Bodies, juſt the ſame Men that they were, but yet *quantum mutatus ab illo*, they won't look altogether as they did; there will be ſome change in their Countenances, which will betray very different Paſſions, and give a very different Air and Aſpect to them.

We may eaſily imagine that Atheiſts and Infidels, who have diſputed very Subtilly and Philoſophically againſt a God and Religion, and broke many a Witty Jeſt upon Heaven and Hell, will be not a little amazed, when they ſhall ſee all their Philoſophy confuted, and their Jeſts quite ſpoiled by the Appearance of their Judge.

What Surprize and Aſtoniſhment will then be ſeen in the Looks of ſecure Sinners, who never thought of Judgment, but reckoned themſelves very ſafe, by baniſhing the thoughts of it! As if God would not judge them, unleſs they thought of being judged.

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The brave and the bold Sinners, who mocked at Fear, especially at the Fear of God as a base and unmanly Passion, will not be able to conceal their Fears then; but even those mighty Hectors, the great Disturbers of Mankind, who carried Fear and Terror in their Looks, and made the World tremble before them, will then stand trembling before their Judge, and *call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.*

On the other hand, with what Triumph will good men lift up their heads; the poor, the despised, the persecuted, the reproached, the vilified Worshippers of the Crucified Jesus, and the Disciples of the Cross? Their Sorrows will then flye away like the Shades of Night at the approach of the Sun, their Tears will be dried up, and we shall see nothing but secure Joy give Lustre and Brightness to their Looks.

We are extremely imposed on by the present appearances of things; Vice looks gay and bold, and fearless in this World, and Virtue many times as mean and contemptible as Injustice and Oppression can make it; that it would be of great use to us sometimes to remove the Scene from this World to the Day of Judgment, when all Mankind shall appear together; the greatest Appearance that ever was; and therefore it is much more considerable how we shall appear then, than how we appear in this world.

But

But the Enquiry here is, Why GOD judges all the World at once, and ſummons all Mankind together to receive their Final Sentence? Now that God will do ſo is very plain; why he does it, he has not told us; but whoever wiſely conſiders this matter, will diſcover great and excellent ends which may be ſerved by ſuch a publick Judgment; and that may ſatisfy us that there is great reaſon why God ſhould do it; and theſe may be referred to two General Heads: 1. With reſpect to God himſelf. 2. With reſpect to Men, both Good and Bad Men.

I. With reſpect to God: And this Univerſal Judgment greatly tends to advance the Divine Name and Glory.

1. As I hinted to you before, this will juſtify the Divine Providence, and diſplay all the various Wiſdom, and expound and unriddle all the ſecret Myſteries of it: When God comes to judge the World, it is to juſtify himſelf, as well as to judge men; for what St. *Paul* ſays, is moſt properly applicable to the Laſt Judgment, *Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged*, 3. Rom. 4. And St. *Jude* makes this one great end of the Laſt Judgment, *The Lord ſhall come with ten thouſand of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken*

againſt him, *Jude* 14, 15. How many ſuch hard Speeches do we daily hear againſt the Divine Providence? and how hard are Good men, who know but little of the matter, put to it to anſwer the Cavils and Reproaches of Atheiſts and Infidels? We can indeed ſay enough in general to vindicate the Divine Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs; but there are a thouſand particular Caſes which ſeem very hard, which we can ſay nothing to, becauſe we know nothing of them.

But when all the World ſhall be ſummoned before God's Tribunal, all the Ages and Generations of Men, we ſhall then have a perfect Hiſtory of Providence, and that will expound the Reaſons of Things, which are now obſcure. When we ſhall hear how every particular Man, every Age and Generation of Men, every Countrey and Nation have behaved themſelves, and how God dealt with them; what Talents they were entruſted with, and what account they give; then all Mouths will be ſtopped, and the whole World will become guilty before God, 3. *Rom.* 19. Then we ſhall ſee an entire Chain of Providences, and all the various and intricate Turnings of the Divine Wiſdom in its different Forms and Adminiſtrations, but ſtill within the Sphere and Circle of Juſtice and Goodneſs. How ſhall we then admire GOD, when we ſhall ſee all theſe wonderful and curious Scenes unfolded! when we ſhall obſerve the gradual and regular Advances of Goodneſs in the ſeveral Ages of the World, proportioned to the Wants and Capacities of men,

men, till it came to the full Maturity and Perfection of Gospel-Grace! What a delightful Prospect will this be to Good men! how will it enlarge their Knowledge! increase their Wonder! inflame their Devotions! How will it confound Bad men, especially all the Prophane Scoffers at God and his Providence! How will this aggravate and increase their Torments, that they will be forced to admire and justify God in their own Damnation, which must turn all their Rage and Fury upon themselves!

This is reason enough why God should judge the World all together, to justify himself to all his Creatures, and to make a glorious Discovery of all the Wonders and Mysteries of his Grace and Providence: Good men see enough at present to admire and praise God: But now, as St. *Paul* tells us, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known,* 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10, 11, 12. The Divine Wisdom will never appear so glorious as at the Day of Judgment, because it will never be so perfectly known, as then when he shall come *to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe*, 2 Thes. 1. 10. What good man would not long to see that blessed Day,

which will perfect his Soul with the Knowledge, and Love, and Admiratio n of God; and give him ſuch clear, raiſed, and divine Thoughts and Paſſions, as are fit for Heaven, and the immediate Preſence of God, whither he is a going? What wiſe man will not reſolve to be very good, that at that Day he may ſee the Glory of God without Terror and Aſtoniſhment; with all thoſe Raptures and Exſtaſies with which ſuch new and bright Appearances of the Divine Wiſdom will fill the Soul?

2. God ſummons all Mankind together to Judgment, that Men and Angels may be Witneſſes of his equal and impartial Juſtice. We are all equally God's Creatures, the Rich and the Poor, the Honourable and the Vile, the Prince and the Subject are alike to him; and Juſtice requires that they ſhould be alike; that the juſt Judge of the World ſhould reſpect no man's Perſon in Judgment. Now there is no ſuch way to convince all the World that God is an Equal and Impartial, that is, a very Juſt and Righteous Judge, as to Judge all the World together; for then they themſelves may ſee whether God be partial or not.

But there is a great deal more I mean by this; for the Providence of God in this World is very liable to the Charge of Partiality; that he has not an equal Regard to all his Creatures; I do not mean with reference to their Fortune and Station in this World, that ſome are Rich, others Poor, ſome Princes and Nobles entruſted with great Powers;

ers; others Subjects, and expoſed to the Wills and Luſts of Princes, for this is more eaſily accounted for, ſuch different Ranks of Men being neceſſary to good Order and Government in the World; but I mean with reſpect to their Souls, and their eternal State; that God has not taken equal care to inſtruct all Mankind in their Duty, to acquaint them with the Danger of Sin, and the Rewards and Puniſhments of the next Life, and the Certainty of a Future Judgment; and this is too viſible to be denied.

God ſuffered Mankind to fall into Idolatry, and when they had corrupted their Natural Notions of Good and Evil, ſent no Prophet among them to inſtruct them better; and when after ſome Ages he called *Abraham* out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and having tried his Faith and Obedience, entred into Covenant with him; yet he confined his Covenant to his Poſterity, whom he choſe for his peculiar People, and took no viſible care of the reſt of the World; and though this was a great Privilege of *Iſrael* above the reſt of Mankind, yet the *Moſaical* Law was but a weak and imperfect Diſpenſation, but a Childiſh Pedagogy, and the *Jewiſh* Church but in the ſtate of Servants, or of an Heir under Age.

And though God did at laſt ſend Chriſt into the World to make a perfect Revelation of his Will, yet it was towards the end of the World; and what a wonderful difference has this made between thoſe who enjoy the Light of the Goſpel, and the reſt of Mankind;

as if they had not all the ſame Maker, or were not equally his Creatures: And yet how little a part of the World is there ſtill, which have the Goſpel preached to them; and how much leſs, which have it ſincerely preached?

The Juſtice of God, I confeſs, cannot be impeached upon this account, for God was not wanting to any of them in what was neceſſary; he made them reaſonable and underſtanding Creatures, gave them ſufficient natural Evidence of his own Being and Providence; and the Natural Notices of Good and Evil, and the Natural Expectations of Rewards and Puniſhments, which St. *Paul* tells us is enough to render them inexcuſable; *That the inviſible things of God from the creation of the world, are known by the things that are ſeen, even his eternal power and godhead, ſo that they are without excuſe*, 1. Rom. 20. and what is more than this, is pure Grace, which God may give or deny, when and where he pleaſes: Nor is the Goodneſs of God, and Care of his Creatures to be blamed upon this ſcore, for in every Age he did what was wiſe and fit to be done; for the ſeveral Ages of the World, required different Diſpenſations of Grace; and in the fulneſs of Time, when the World was prepared for it, he ſent his Son. But yet we muſt confeſs, That God has done more for *Jews* than he did for Heathens, and more for Chriſtians than he did for either; which is an Objection that troubles the Minds even of ſome Good men, who do not thoroughly conſider things, and darkens and obſcures their Notions of the Divine Goodneſs.

And

And when all the World is met together to Judgment, it ſeems at firſt view to be a very plauſible Objection, That God has not dealt equally with them all, eſpecially when their Eternal State depended on it; and the want of thoſe Means of Grace which God afforded others, though he owed them to neither, made no leſs a difference between them, than Heaven and Hell.

This indeed is a very great Difficulty; but I doubt not but the equal Juſtice of the Laſt Judgment will anſwer it; for otherwiſe I cannot imagine that God would ſummon all the World together before his Tribunal, if he did not intend to deal equally by all: The laſt Judgment will not be over-ruled by Power and Sovereign Prerogative, for that removes no Objections, but only ſilences them; whereas God at the Laſt Day will juſtify himſelf, as well as judge the World; and therefore whatever difference and variety there has been in the external Adminiſtration of his Grace; the Final Judgment ſhall be very equal; and he will appeal to Men and Angels for the Equality as well as for the Juſtice of it.

How God will bring all theſe Unevenneſſes of his Grace and Providence to an Equality, is hard for us to ſay; but yet we know there are ſome poſſible ways of doing it: To make great Abatements and Allowances for invincible Ignorance and Miſtake, for the Faults and Miſcarriages of Education, for the Wickedneſs and Corruption of the Age wherein men live, and for want of the Means

of Grace and Knowledge; and to exact Improvements proportionable to our Receits, and to those greater Advantages we enjoy; and to increase and lessen Rewards and Punishments by these Measures, will bring Men pretty near an equal Level, according to our Saviour's Rule, *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more,* 12. Luke 47, 48. So much are those Nominal Christians mistaken, who are so far from thinking that God expects more from them than from ignorant Heathens, that they hope to escape with those Vices for which they themselves think fit that Heathens should be damned: No, Beloved, God will Judge all the World together; and that is a Demonstration to me that he will be very equal in his Justice; and then he must demand more from Christians than from Heathens, because we have received more.

3. A General Judgment is most for the Glory of God, in punishing Bad men, and rewarding the Good: When a whole World of Sinners stand trembling before God's Tribunal, and receive their Final Doom and Sentence from his Mouth, this is a more visible Triumph of his Justice, than had they all silently dropt into Hell, as they went out of this World, and we had heard

heard no more of them to Eternity. The Wiſdom of all Governments has taught them the neceſſity of Publick Executions; and when God would make himſelf known in the World, he executes ſome publick and viſible Judgments, which may command our Notice and Obſervance: Thus he did when he ſpared *Pharaoh* from the deſtruction of thoſe numerous Plagues he ſent on *Egypt*, and reſerved him for a more glorious Execution, when he overthrew him and all his Hoſt in the Red Sea: Thus he did when he ſent Fire from Heaven to deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and in numerous other Inſtances: Theſe terrible Executions indeed are intended by God as Publick Warnings to the World, to teach men to fear God, and reverence his Power and Juſtice, and prevent their own Ruin by a timely Repentance: Now this end they cannot ſerve in the other World, when the Devil and his Angels, and all bad men are involved in the ſame Ruin, and there are no Sinners left to take warning, and to learn Righteouſneſs by it: But Saints and Angels are Spectators and Witneſſes of the Vengeance, and adore and praiſe the Righteous Judge of the World; and Devils and all wicked men ſee and feel it too, and tremble and fly before him, are forced to confeſs his Power and Glory, though with anguiſh and deſpair. This is a glorious and viſible Triumph over all his Enemies, and all the Powers of Darkneſs.

And

And how glorious is God in his Saints, when he publickly rewards their Faith and Patience, their Obedience and Sufferings for his Name sake; when in the sight of all the World he cloathes them with pure Lights, and receives them into his Eternal Kingdom; the Glory of God is the Publick Manifestation of his Justice, and Goodness, and Power; now there cannot be a more unquestionable Demonstration of the inflexible Justice of God, than the Final Destruction of the Devil and his Angels, and all wicked men; there cannot be a more glorious Manifestation of the Goodness of God, than in the Final Rewards of Piety and Virtue; and nothing can be more publick and visible, than that which is done before all the World. And this makes it reasonable for God to summon all the World before his Tribunal, to make himself visibly glorious to all his Creatures.

God has been greatly dishonoured in the World; some have denied his Being and Providence, others have set up Rival and Opposite Gods, and given his Worship to Devils, to Dead Men, to Wood and Stone, nay, to the vilest and most contemptible Creatures; others have framed very unworthy Notions of God, and cloathed him with their own Weaknesses and Passions, made him either a Tyrant and a Devil, or such a tame, easy, fond Being, as men may make bold with without danger; others prophane his Name, corrupt his Worship, or neglect and despise it: Some think themselves too big to serve God, others too little to be observed by him; some ridicule his

Laws,

Laws, others take no notice of them; and there are very few who are ſincere Worſhippers of him, and acknowledge and ſubmit to his Authority and Power; and when God has been ſo much diſhonoured in the World, I think it is very fit, that when he Judges the World, he ſhould vindicate his own Glory, make it publick and viſible, and force all his Creatures to own and confeſs it; and the moſt effectual way to do this, is by ſummoning all Mankind before him, and judging them according to their Works. Thus we ſee what reaſon there is, with reſpect to God, why he ſhould not Judge Men ſingly, and ſend them privately and ſilently to Heaven or Hell, but appoint a general Day of Judgment.

II. There is great reaſon for this too, with reſpect to Men, both to Good and to Bad men; for this is part of the Reward of Virtue, and of the Puniſhment of Vice. Many Good men have been uſed with the utmoſt Contempt and Scorn; if they cannot comply with their Company, and do as their Neighbours do; if they boggle at popular and faſhionable Vices; they are gazed on as ſo many Comets and Prodigies, and would be contented to be gazed on, were they as far out of the reach of danger too, as thoſe Meteors are; ſome call them Fools, others Knaves and Hypocrites, and treat them accordingly: And is it not fit that GOD ſhould vindicate theſe Men, who have ſuffered Infamy and Reproach for his ſake? that he ſhould publickly own them, applaud and reward their Virtue: And what

what a glorious Vindication is this, if we can but have patience to expect it: What a little contemptible Scene in this World, nay, this little Corner of the World where we live; for whether we be Praised or Reproached, it is likely we are never heard of out of the Parish and Neighbourhood, or City, or Kingdom, where we live; and can't we be contented to let a whole Parish, or City, or Kingdom despise us, to be publickly owned by God in the General Assembly of Men and Angels?

Good Men do a great many good Actions privately, which few or none are conscious to, but God and themselves, and therefore they lose the Praise which is due to such secret Virtues in this World; but our Saviour hath promised, that such men shall have praise of God; that if we Pray, and Fast, and give Alms in secret, *Our Father which seeth in secret shall reward us openly*, 6. *Matth.* And this is a great encouragement to the practice of the most secret Virtues, that we shall be openly rewarded for them.

Good Men are many times great Sufferers in this World, are not only Reproached, but Persecuted, lose their Estates, their Liberties, their Lives, for Christ's sake: and though God has strictly forbid them to avenge themselves, yet he will execute Vengeance on their Enemies, and do it publickly, and make them the Spectators and Witnesses of it.

On the other hand, Wickedness is many times very glorious and triumphant in this World,

World, is ſo far from ſuffering Shame, which is the juſt Reward of it, that it is applauded and courted; and the greateſt Prodigies of Wickedneſs are adored for their proſperous Villanies; but yet Shame is the juſt Reward of Sin, and it muſt have it at one time or other; and nothing can more effectually caſt Shame and Contempt upon Sinners, than a general Judgment, when they ſhall be publickly arraigned and condemned in the great Aſſembly of Men and Angels: This will confound the moſt glorious Sinner, who never bluſhed before; for though while Bad men are ſupported with Power, or are the moſt numerous Party, and can out-vote and outlaugh the reſt of the World, they can ſecure themſelves againſt the ſenſe of Shame: yet when they appear before ſuch a Judge, and have their Villanies expoſed to all the World; when they are ſtript of their Riches, and Honours, and Power, and ſee all their Admirers and Companions paſt Laughing and Flattery, and themſelves deſpiſed and ſcorned by God and his holy Saints and Angels, and condemned to everlaſting Miſeries, it will then be impoſſible for them any longer to glory in their Shame: Confuſion will then cover their Faces; and it would be thought very merciful to be damned privately without ſeeing their Judge, and being expoſed to publick Scorn and Cenſure.

Thus there are a great many wicked things done privately, and concealed from the Eyes of Men, and many times gilded over with a form and counterfeit appearance of Religion; and

and ſuch ſecret Villains not only eſcape publick Shame, but are thought very extraordinary Men and great Saints: now it is very fitting, that ſuch men alſo ſhould have their Maſque and Diſguiſe taken off, and be expoſed to the View of the World juſt as they are; and this God will do in that Day, when he will Judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts, and bring to light the hidden Works of Darkneſs: And then what will it avail them to paſs for Saints in this World, when at the Day of Judgment they ſhall be known, and be doubly ſcorned, both for their Wickedneſs, and for their Hypocriſy.

What a ſevere Aggravation will it be of the Condemnation of the Wicked, to ſee good Men, whom they deſpiſed and perſecuted, whoſe Lives they thought Folly and Madneſs now owned and rewarded by God; as our Saviour ſpeaks, *To ſee them come from the Eaſt and from the Weſt, from the North and from the South, and ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God, and themſelves ſhut out?* This will be a confounding Sight at that Day; and as little as ſuch Men now value Heaven, to ſee the bright and dazling Crowns of thoſe bleſſed Saints, will pierce their Souls, and wound them to Eternity.

This juſtifies the Wiſdom of God, in appointing a general Day of Judgment, to reward Good men, and to condemn the Wicked: but there is one good-natur'd Objection againſt this, which reſpects Good men; for there are few Good men, but may have ſome very

very wicked Relations, who yet are very dear to them; and how can they bear to be Witneſſes of their final Condemnation; to hear that Sentence pronounced on them, *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* We tremble at the Thoughts of it now; and one would think it ſhould over-caſt the Glory of that Day to ſuch bleſſed Saints, to ſee ſuch a terrible Execution upon thoſe who were ſo dear to them: but this is ſuch a Miſtake, as the Sadduces Objection againſt the Reſurrection, concerning *the woman who had ſeven husbands, whoſe wife ſhe ſhould be of the ſeven at the reſurrection, for they all had her*: but our Saviour told them, *at the reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven*: Thus it is here; thoſe natural Affections and Paſſions which are of ſo great uſe in this World, and makes us ſo nearly concerned for Children, and other Relations, are not the Meaſures of our Kindneſs, and Friendſhip, and Concernment in the other World; they are neceſſary here many times to ſupply the place of Reaſon and Virtue, and to prompt us to do thoſe good Offices by the impatience and uneaſineſs of a Paſſion, which the generality of Mankind would not do from wiſer Principles: but the end of theſe Paſſions is ſerved in this World, and there is no occaſion for them in the next; and therefore we ſhall feel no uneaſineſs or diſturbance from them: Good men will have no Friends, no Relations in the other World, but thoſe who

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are

are truly good, who are Members of the same Mystical Body of Christ, the Children of God, and Heirs of the same Happiness and Glory.

To conclude, I shall only observe this farther; How vain it is for Bad men to hope to defend themselves from Shame and Punishment by their Numbers; they may, I confess, do it in this World, when they have to deal with Men, though when God comes to judge them even in this World, the most powerful Combinations of Sinners, are but like Chaff before the Wind: But if ever Numbers would do, it would be at the Day of Judgment, when the Devil and his Angels, and all Bad men shall be summoned together; and if they cannot then defend themselves, when their whole Force is united, but stand as Criminals before their Judge, and receive their Sentence from him, it becomes us to fear and tremble before that powerful Judge, who has all Nature at his command, and all Devils and Wicked men in Chains, and with the Word of his Mouth can condemn them to eternal Torments.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Day of Judgment is at the End of the World.

III. THE Day of Judgment is at the End of the World: That it will be ſo, and the Reaſons why it will be ſo, are very plain, from what I have already diſcourſed: our Saviour tells us that it is at the end of the World, when the Angels ſhall ſeparate between the Wheat and the Tares which grew in the ſame Field; between the good and the bad Fiſh which were taken in the ſame Net, 13. *Matth.* It is in the Evening of the World, when the Lord comes to reckon with his Servants, and to reward thoſe who have laboured in his Vineyard, 20. *Matth.* for when Chriſt comes to Judgment, this World ſhall be ſet on fire, and this preſent viſible Frame of Things ſhall be diſſolved, as St. *Peter* tells us, 2 *Pet.* 3. 10, 11, 12. Upon which account Chriſt is ſaid to come in flaming Fire; of which more hereafter: And if God will judge all Mankind together, the Day of Judgment muſt be at the end of the World.

But beſides this, it ſeems very reaſonable and congruous, that the Final Judgment and the End of the World ſhould come together; or that when God finally Judges all Mankind, he ſhould put an end to this habitable Earth.

For this Earth was made for the Habitation of man, and all things in it for his use and delight, and therefore it receives its Fate and Destiny with Man too.

Paradise was the Habitation of Innocent Man; and had Man continued Innocent, and Peopled the World with an Innocent and Holy Race, the whole World must have been a Paradise; but when Man had sinned, and had no Right to so easy and happy a Life, the Ground was cursed for his sake, 3. Gen. 17, 18, 19. *Cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return unto the ground.*

When all Flesh had corrupted their ways, excepting *Noah* and his Family, God destroyed the Old World with its wicked Inhabitants: And to this day, besides that Original Curse which still rests upon the Earth, Nature suffers for the Sins of man, and revives and flourishes again, as he returns to his Duty: *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground: a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* And on the other hand, *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation*, 107. Psal. 33, 34, 35, 36.

It were easy to Harangue here, and describe the Ruins and Desolations which the

the Judgments of God have brought upon the moſt flouriſhing Countries for the Sins of the Inhabitants, Famine, and Peſtilence, and Sword: The Sword, which carries all other Judgments along with it; but God knows, we live in an Age wherein there is no need of haranguing about it; this is ſeen, and felt, and heard every day; ſuch Miſeries as are beyond the Deſcription of the moſt Eloquent Tongue or Pen: God grant we may only hear of them; that we may take warning by what others ſuffer, and appeaſe the Wrath of God by a timely Repentance.

Now for the ſame reaſon, when God judges all Mankind, he will put an end to this preſent ſtate of Things: When Man, for whom this Earth was framed, ſhall dwell no longer on it, but all Good men ſhall be received into Heaven, and all Bad men condemned to Hell, this World has laſted as long as it was made for, and muſt now be caſt into a new Mould and Frame.

For ſo indeed the Scripture repreſents it; not that this World ſhall be deſtroyed, but that it ſhall be new made; that as the whole Creation is made ſubject to Vanity by *Adam*'s Curſe, ſo it ſhall be redeemed from Vanity and Corruption too, when Man is. It ſhall be purged by Fire, and a new Incorruptible World ſhall ſpring out of its Aſhes, 8. *Rom.* 19, 20, 21, 22. *For the earneſt expectation of the creature* (which muſt ſignify this viſible Creation) *waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. For the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of*

him who hath ſubjected the ſame in hope: Becauſe the creature it ſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God: (Or when the Sons and Children of God ſhall be delivered from Corruption.) *For we know the whole creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain until now.* And thus St. *Peter* tells us, That at the Laſt Judgment this World ſhall be deſtroyed with Fire; *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs,* 2 Pet. 13. 3. Where St. *Peter* refers to the Prophecy of *Iſaiah* 65. 17. *For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former ſhall not be remembred, nor come into mind.* Which St. *Peter* underſtands in a literal ſenſe, not merely of a more proſperous ſtate of Things in this world.

And thus St. *John*, at the Concluſion of his Revelations, immediately after his Account of the Laſt Judgment, gives us a Deſcription of this New Heaven and New Earth, 21. *Rev.* 1. *&c. And I ſaw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away; and there was no more ſea. And I John ſaw the holy city, new Jeruſalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, ſaying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, and be their God. And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there*

be

be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away. And the reſt of that Book is ſpent in deſcribing the Glory of the Great City, the Holy *Jeruſalem*, the River of the Water of Life, proceeding from the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, and the Tree of Life which bore Twelve manner of Fruits.

Theſe are great Myſteries, which we cannot perfectly underſtand yet, eſpecially what St. *John* ſays about the new *Jeruſalem*'s coming down from Heaven, to take up its Seat and Habitation on this New Earth; that there is the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, where God dwells, and which he enlightens with his Preſence, and from whence he drives away Death, and Sorrow, and Pain; which ſeems to ſignify, that as the old Heavens and old Earth are deſtroyed by Fire, in Vengeance on its wicked Inhabitants, ſo this new Heaven and new Earth, which God makes after the Deſtruction of the old, is the Seat of the Bleſſed after their Reſurrection from the Dead; which I confeſs I know not how to underſtand.

But this gives a plain account why the Final Judgment, when Good men ſhall receive their Final Reward, ſhall not be till the end of the World, becauſe this old World muſt be deſtroyed before GOD makes thoſe new Heavens and new Earth: The Final Deſtruction of Bad men will begin with the Deſtruction of this old World; and the Rewards and Happineſs of Good men ſhall be conſummated in the new World, whatever that be, where they ſhall dwell

for ever in the immediate Presence of God, and of the Lamb.

Now that God defers the Day of Judgment to the end of the world, may, 1. Convince us of God's great Patience and Long-suffering towards Sinners; for he forbears their Execution as long as he can forbear destroying the world; and that we may be sure is as long as Wisdom and Justice will permit: To destroy a World is a Work of as great Wisdom and Counsel, as to make one; nay, the Divine Goodness will easily justify the making of a World at any time; for no time is unfit to exercise such acts of Goodness as will justify themselves; but for God to destroy the World which he has made, without great necessity for it, reflects upon his Wisdom and Goodness in making it: The wise Maker of the World can have no inclination to destroy it; and though the Justice of Providence may require some more hasty Executions to maintain good Order and Government, and to give check to Vice, yet the Final Destruction of the World requires all wise Delays; and Sinners can expect no more of God, than to defer their Final Sentence as long as he can defer the end of the world. It is great pity that such Goodness and Patience should be so monstrously abused; that men should harden themselves in sin, and conclude, that God will not Judge the world, because he is so unwilling to Destroy it; but this will justify the Severity of the Last Judgment, that it is not the effect of a hasty and sudden Fury, but of mature Counsel; that

that God did not want Goodneſs to ſpare Sinners, as long as Wiſdom and Juſtice could ſpare them. To be ſlow to execute Judgment, is as eſſential to Goodneſs, as it is to Juſtice at laſt to puniſh: And to conclude that God will not puniſh at all, becauſe he is patient, and delays to puniſh, is to prove that God cannot be Juſt, becauſe he is Good.

2. That God deſtroys the world when he judges it, is an undeniable Proof of the Severity of the Laſt Judgment; for what a terrible Vengeance is that which fires the world, and diſſolves this preſent Frame of Nature? This *is a fiery indignation* indeed *to devour the Adverſary*, 10. Heb. 27. when bad men and wicked Spirits ſhall be encompaſſed with Flames and Smoke, without any poſſibility to eſcape; for whither can they fly out of a fired world? when *the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and all that is therein ſhall be burnt up.*

There are a great many brave Sinners, who mock at Fear, and harden themſelves againſt Hell it ſelf; but if they can be ſerious but for ſome few Minutes, let them imagine all the world on fire about them; the Heavens covered with thick Darkneſs, and the whole Earth but one *Vulcano*, one *Ætna*, or *Veſuvius*, vomiting up Rivers of Burning Sulphur, and themſelves plunged in the midſt of it; let them try how they can bear this Thought, before they laugh at Hell; for this will certainly be the ſtate of ſinners at the Day of Judgment: And ſhould not this make us fear and

tremble before that great and powerful Judge? *Who knoweth the power of his wrath? who can live with devouring fire? who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?*

What an irreſiſtible Judge is he who can deſtroy the world, and all ſinners with it! The World, that was their God, and now will be their Funeral Pile; according to the Fate of ſome Heathen Idolaters, they ſhall be ſacrificed to their own God, and tormented in the Embraces of a Burning Idol.

The Deſtruction of the world gives a terrible Pomp and Solemnity to the Laſt Judgment: It will aſtoniſh Bad men, and break their ſtout Hearts, to ſee the world in Flames; it will convince them to purpoſe, that God is come to judge them, and that he is very ſevere and terrible in his Judgments: Who can deſcribe the Horrors, and Agonies, and Conſternation of that Day! Caſt your Thoughts back a little upon that Terrible Day, when you ſaw *London* on fire; when you ſaw your Houſes and Treaſure all vaniſh into Duſt and Smoke: What did you think then of the Power and Juſtice of God? And yet this was no more than a little Bonefire, compared with the Univerſal Conflagration: Though you could not ſave your Houſes, and Furniture, and Treaſure from its Rage and Fury, yet there was room left for your own Eſcape; and if this were ſo amazing a ſight, as all of you who ſaw it, cannot but confeſs it was, what will it be to ſee the whole world on fire, and your ſelves encompaſſed in the Flames of it! To ſee all thoſe tempting Objects, all

the

the Inſtruments of your Pleaſures, all the Riches and Glory of the World, which were the Fuel of your Luſts, now turned into a devouring Fire to torment you, to expiate thoſe Flames they kindled in your Souls, by ſenſible and material Flames! Who would make this World his Portion and Inheritance, who conſiders the end of it? It looks charmingly indeed at preſent, it invites and careſſes, and lays Baits and Snares for us; but if we will have the World for our Portion, it muſt be our Portion too at the Day of Judgment: And conſider how you ſhall like its Courtſhip, when it incircles you with Flames, and Smoak, and Darkneſs! Thoſe who chuſe this World for their Portion, can never remove out of it, and therefore muſt be contented to ſhare Fortunes with it, to ſmile when it ſmiles, and to burn when it burns.

With what triumph will good men at that day, ſee themſelves out of the reach of a burning World! They betimes made their eſcape out of this World, as foreſeeing its approaching Ruin; they were not of the World while they lived in it, but diſintangled their Affections from this World, while their Bodies were confined below: And ſuch Divine Souls, whoſe Converſation was in Heaven, as ſoon as they get looſe from theſe Bodies, aſcend far above this Sphere of Corruption, out of danger either of being tempted, or being hurt by this World.

With what triumph will they behold God erect a new World for them to inhabit; create a new Heaven and a new Earth, where he will

will place his Throne and Tabernacle, and dwell among them, and be their God!

What Bad man can hear these things without Terror and Amazement? What Good man does not long for this happy day, for this Marriage of the Lamb? when *the new Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*, 21. Revel. 2.

3. That the Day of Judgment is at the end of the World, proves that this Judgment is final and irreversible, because this present state of things is come to an end; and as this puts a final conclusion to this World, so to all accounts relating to it: This World is a changeable Scene, but the next World is eternal; and therefore as Good and Bad men are disposed of in the next World, they must continue for ever. This World will be destroyed; and therefore Bad men can never return into it again, to act over a new part, and to correct the Sins and Follies of their Former lives, as *Origen* conceived they should, after a long time of punishment, when the fleshly Principle is thoroughly subdued by the torments they have suffered: Which Opinion, how much mercy and good nature soever there may be in it, has not the least countenance from Scripture, nor any foundation that I know of in Reason; when the World where they lived, and where they sinned, is at an end, I think there is an end also of their acting any new part in it.

And

And that new World, where Good men ſhall dwell in the immediate preſence of God, ſhall laſt for ever; there is no death, no pain, no crying, for there can be no ſin there, there is no Devil, no World to tempt, and nothing within to be tempted; they enter clean and pure into that holy place, and the immediate ſight and preſence of God will eternally keep them ſo. Had we no poſitive Revelation of the Eternity of Rewards and Puniſhments, it were yet reaſonable to conclude, that if the Day of Judgment put an end to this World, without putting an end to Good or Bad men, but only tranſlating them to a new ſtate of Happineſs or Miſery; that their Happineſs or Miſery muſt laſt as long as that new ſtate does, and their Sentence can never be reverſed without a new Day of Judgment: and therefore if this be the laſt and final Judgment, Good and Bad men muſt then enter upon an unalterable and eternal ſtate of Happineſs or Miſery; and this is the moſt comfortable and moſt terrible Conſideration of all.

How will the Souls of Good men rejoice in God their Saviour, when they ſhall ſee themſelves poſſeſt of an eternal and unchangeable happineſs! when this mutable Scene is vaniſhed, and they have *an abiding City, whoſe builder and maker is God*; when they can look forward to Eternity without fearing Death, or any Change or Diminution of their Happineſs, which may increaſe to Eternity, and be always new and freſh, but can never admit of any interruption or allay!

But

But I will not pretend to describe the Confusion, the Distraction, the raging despair of those wretched Sinners, who shall be condemned to Everlasting Fire; who see an end of all their Happiness, and but the beginning of their Miseries in a fired World: Our Thoughts cannot reach this now; We have no Passions yet big enough for such a Misery; Eternal Torment! Blessed JESU, have mercy upon us! and let the present fear and dread of it preserve us from ever knowing what it means.

If you should ask me, When the end of the World, and the Day of Judgment will come? I must confess to you, I do not know; for our Saviour has before told us, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.* That we are not concerned to know when this shall be, nay, that God has very wise Reasons to conceal this from us, I have shewed you before: I shall now add, 1. That it is not likely to be yet. 2. That how long soever it be delayed, we have great reason at present to provide for it. Especially, 3. when we are sure that the time now hastens, after so long an expectation of it.

I. That it is not likely to be yet: In St. *Paul's* time some Christians were in great apprehension, that the Day of Judgment was near, and it seems were in a terrible Fright about it: but the Apostle thought fit to correct this Mistake, and that with some earnestness, as if it were a mistake of ill consequence; and so

ſo indeed it might have proved, if not to them, yet to thoſe who follow; who obſerving their Miſtake about the Day of Judgment confuted, as all ſuch Miſtakes are, by the event, might have concluded, that the whole was a Miſtake, and that there ſhould be no Day of Judgment, becauſe it did not come when it was expected; and therefore the Apoſtle thought fit to warn them againſt it: *Now we beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 1, 2.

And to ſatisfy them in this, he does not undertake to tell them when the Day of Judgment ſhall be, for that he did not know; but only tells them, That *there muſt come a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God.* And this man of Sin not being then revealed, it was plain, that the Day of Judgment could not ſo ſuddenly come as they expected: And now we find by Story, that it was ſome Ages after this, before the man of Sin was revealed.

After this, St. *John* wrote his Book of the *Revelations*, and did we thoroughly underſtand that, though we ſhould not certainly know the preciſe time of Judgment, yet we ſhould know how many things are ſtill to be done before the Day of Judgment; for that contains

tains an intire Prophecy of the Christian Church, from the beginning of it to the end of the World. And though I will not pretend to understand those Mysteries, especially what is there called the Thousand Years Reign of Christ upon the Earth, which, whatever it signifies, seems to be before the end of the World, and the final Judgment; yet we certainly learn from thence, that the Man of Sin must be destroyed before the last Judgment; and if this be the Popish Hierarchy, as I doubt not but it is, it is plain this is not done yet; and I wish his final Overthrow be so near as some Learned men think it is.

But I think there is another Prophecy of St. *Paul* himself, which has not been accomplished yet, which must receive its accomplishment before the Day of Judgment; and we see no prospect of its present accomplishmeut, I mean the conversion of the *Jews*, and the re-union of them to the Christian Church.

This we have an account of in 11. *Rom.* which whatever some learned men imagine, I can by no means think has received its just accomplishment by those few *Jews* which were converted by the preaching of the Apostles, and the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; for Verse 15. he tells us, *If the casting away of the Jews is the reconciling of the world*, (that is, if the Gospel was preached to the *Gentiles* upon the obstinate Infidelity of the *Jews*) *What shall the reconciling of them be, but life from the dead?* That is, the Conversion of the *Jews* shall be a new Life to the *Gentile* world, a new Resurrection of Christianity among

among us. But was ever any ſuch thing done yet? In Verſe 25, 26. he tells them, *For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, (leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits) that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in. And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.* Now has any ſuch thing yet been done? has all *Iſrael*, or the generality of the *Jews* been converted to Chriſtianity? and yet the Apoſtle aſſures us this muſt be done by virtue of God's Covenant with *Abraham*. *As concerning the Goſpel, they are enemies for your ſake*; (God ſo ordered it, that by their Infidelity the Goſpel ſhould be preached to the *Gentile*-world) *yet as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers ſake*: As the Poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, whom God choſe as his peculiar People. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* God will never wholly reject the Poſterity of *Abraham*, whom he hath choſe for his people, but will ſtill eſtabliſh his Covenant with them: And that God has now rejected them for their Infidelity, is no argument that he will never own them again; for ſo he had rejected the *Gentiles* for their Unbelief, but now he has received them into his Church, upon their Faith in Chriſt; and thus he will again graft the *Jews* into his Church, *if they abide not ſtill in their unbelief*, v. 30, 31. which the Apoſtle propheſies they ſhall not, *For as ye in times paſt have not*

not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. Now such a Conversion as this of the *Jews*, I think has not been yet, and therefore must be expected before the Day of Judgment, and the end of the World, which shews that the end of the World will not be yet; and how long it may be deferred we cannot tell.

II. How long soever the end of the World, and the Day of Judgment be delayed, yet we have great reason immediately to prepare for it: for indeed this Life is the only time we have to prepare for it: Death puts an end to our account for Eternity; for we shall be judged according to what we have done in the Body, whether it be good or bad; and the final Sentence shall pass on us according to that state which Death finds us in; which seems to be the reason why our Saviour warns us always to be upon our watch, *As not knowing at what hour our Lord will come*; for whatever the intermediate state be, how long soever it be between Death and Judgment, yet our account is the same; and to be surprized by Death before we are provided for it, is the same thing as to be surprized by Judgment: 24. Matth. 42, 43, 44. *Watch therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think*

think not, the Son of man cometh. Which if it concern all Chriſtians, muſt relate to the hour of Death, as well as the Day of Judgment.

And therefore flatter not your ſelves, that Judgment is a great way off, when you know not how near Death is, which will finiſh your Account. The State of Bad men is very miſerable, as you have already heard, as ſoon as they go out of theſe Bodies, and they are reſerved for the terrible Judgment of the great Day; and tho the Day of Judgment is not yet, is it not a terrible thing to be certainly reſerved for it? Which how long ſoever it be delayed, has an Eternity to follow.

III. But if the near approach of the end of the World, and the Day of Judgment be conſiderable, it is certain that is not far off neither; the World has continued now ſome thouſand Years; and if the time of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were the laſt Days, after Sixteen hundred Years we muſt be pretty near the end of the laſt Days: We have a nearer proſpect of Eternity, than thoſe had who lived ſome thouſand Years ago, at leaſt if they had known how long this World would have continued; but tho they might not think it would have continued ſo long, we know now, that it cannot continue ſo much longer: there are ſome Propheſies to be accompliſhed ſtill, but how ſoon they may be accompliſhed, we know not; no Man queſtions but that the World now grows to an end, and therefore it is time for every Man to think of Eternity.

CHAP III.

Who shall be our Judge, viz. *The Man* CHRIST JESUS.

III. LET us now consider who shall be our Judge: That *man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*; where there are two things to be considered: *First*, the Person who is to Judge us. *Secondly*, What Assurance we have, that He shall be our Judge.

First, The Person who is to Judge us: *That man whom he hath ordained*; that is, the Man CHRIST JESUS: for thus both Christ and his Apostles assure us, that God hath appointed him to be Judge of the World: *The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, 5. John 22. *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works*, 16. Matthew 27. Thus St. *Peter* assures *Cornelius* concerning Christ, *He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained by God to be the judge of quick and dead*, 10. Acts 42. But there is no need to multiply Texts in so plain a Case; it is of more concernment to inquire, why Christ, who is the Eternal Son of God, and a God Incarnate,

nate, when he is ſpoke of as Judge of the World, is moſt uſually deſcribed as a Man, or the Son of Man; thus, He is that *man whom God hath ordained*; *and the Son of man*; nay, Chriſt himſelf tells us, *For this reaſon God hath given him authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the Son of man*, 5. John 27.

Now the reaſon why our Saviour is deſcribed as a Man, and the Son of Man, when he comes to Judgment, is; becauſe he ſhall viſibly appear in Human Nature to judge the World; and therefore will be, and will appear as much a Man as he did when he dwelt on Earth, though he will appear alſo more like a God: thus the Prophet *Daniel* deſcribes it: *He ſaw in the night viſions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed*, 7. Dan. 13, 14. It is the Son of Man who has this Glory and Kingdom given him, and which he muſt adminiſter as the Son of Man.

And this ſeems the true reaſon why our Saviour ſo often calls himſelf the Son of Man, not as ſome imagine with reſpect to the mean Circumſtances of his Appearance in the World; for this Phraſe, *the Son of Man*, no where in Scripture relates to ſuch an external Meanneſs and Poverty as diſtinguiſhes one

49. *Jer.* 18. 25. *Job* 6. 80. *Psal.* 17. 146. *Psal.* 3. 2. *Ezek.* 1. Man from another; but it either signifies no more than a Man, or it respects the common Weaknesses of Human Nature; and when this Name is applied to any particular Persons, it is never used of mean Men, but always of Princes or Prophets: But by this Title of the Son of Man, our Saviour gives us to understand, that he is that Great and Extraordinary Person, known by the name of *the Son of Man* in *Daniel*'s Visions, whom God hath ordained to be the Lord and Judge of the World.

But I shall not pass over this Argument thus, but shall more particularly consider the great Wisdom of this; how necessary, congruous and fitting it is, that the Son of Man should Judge the World; which will suggest a great many useful Meditations to us. Now I shall reduce what I have to say to these two Heads: 1. That it is very fitting and necessary, that the Saviour of Mankind should be their Judge also. 2. And therefore that the Man Christ Jesus, who is the Saviour of the World, should Judge it.

I. That it is very fitting and necessary that the Saviour of Mankind should be their Judge also; and that upon two Accounts.

1. Because the Authority to judge is essential to the Notion and Authority of a Saviour: *To save Sinners*, signifies *to save them from their Sins*; which is the true Interpretation of the Name *Jesus*, 1. *Matth.* 20. And to save them from their Sins, is to deliver them from

from the Puniſhment of Sin; that is, from the Wrath of God, from the Curſe of the Law, from Death and Hell, to raiſe them from the Dead, and to beſtow Immortal Life on them: Now there are ſeveral Acts muſt concur to perfect this Salvation, but the laſt concluding and finiſhing Act is Judgment. And he only is a compleat and perfect Saviour, who has Authority to Judge, to Pardon, and to Reward.

God is a Holy and Pure Being, and can never be reconciled to Sinners, till they are renewed and ſanctified, which makes it neceſſary for the Saviour of the World, to inſtruct Mankind in their Duty, and by the Power of his Grace to change their Natures, and make them Holy as God is, ſince *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*; and therefore he muſt be a great Prophet and Preacher of Righteouſneſs, *to turn men from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* God is a very Righteous Judge, and has threatned Death againſt Sin; and therefore the Saviour of Sinners muſt make Atonement and Expiation for Sin, muſt *deliver us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us*; that is, muſt be our Prieſt and our Sacrifice, muſt dye for our Sins, and intercede for us with God: but all this while a Sinner is not ſaved till he is finally acquitted and abſolved; till he is actually delivered from the Curſe of the Law, and poſſeſſed of Eternal Life and Glory; all things elſe are only Preparatory Acts, but the final Judgment perfects our Salvation; for he

who finally Pardons, and bestows Heaven on us, is our Saviour: Christ might have been our Prophet, our Priest, and our Sacrifice, without being our Judge, but he could not have been our Saviour without it; and therefore after Christ's Resurrection from the Dead, after he had preach'd the Gospel, and died upon the Cross to expiate our Sins, he tells his Disciples, *All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth*, 28. Matth. And St. *Peter* tells the Sanhedrim, *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins*, 5. Acts 31. So that he saves by Power, he is our Saviour and our Prince; and this Power is the Reward of his Obedience and Sufferings: *Therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father*, 2. Phil. 9, 10, 11. His Power to save is attributed to his Intercession, or Mediatory Kingdom: *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, 7. Heb. 25. And in like manner St. *Paul* attributes our Reconciliation to God, to the Death of Christ, but our Salvation to his Life; that is, to that Power he was invested with at his Resurrection from the Dead: *For if when we were Enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled,*

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we ſhould be ſaved by his life; That is, actually delivered from the Wrath of God, by the Power and Authority of a living Saviour, 5. *Rom.* 10. Upon the ſame account Chriſt is ſaid *to be delivered for our offences, and to be raiſed again for our juſtification*; That is, finally to Abſolve and Juſtify us at the Day of Judgment, 4. *Rom.* 25. For we muſt obſerve, That though Chriſt by his Death has made a general Atonement and Expiation for Sin, and thoſe men are ſaid at preſent to be juſtified, who are in a juſtified State; that is, who are within the Terms of the Covenant for Juſtification, who are ſuch as Chriſt in his Goſpel has promiſed to juſtify; yet properly ſpeaking, no man is finally juſtified till he is finally acquitted and abſolved at the Day of Judgment, till he is judicially delivered from the Wrath of God threatned againſt Sin, and actually ſentenced to Life and Glory: And if Chriſt cannot do this for us, whatever other Benefits we receive by his Miniſtry and Death, he is not a compleat and perfect Saviour; for he does not actually ſave us, unleſs he hath Power and Authority to judge us; that is, finally to abſolve us from all our Sins, and to beſtow Heaven on us. Which ſhews, that the Saviour of Sinners muſt be their Judge, becauſe we are not actually ſaved till we are finally judged: *Moſes* was not a compleat Saviour of *Iſrael*, becauſe though he brought them out of *Egypt*, yet he left them in the Wilderneſs; but *Joſhua* was their Saviour, (and therein a Type of Chriſt) who gave them Poſſeſſion of the Promiſed Land.

2. But beſides the nature of the thing, that our Saviour muſt be our Judge, that is, muſt actually ſave us; there is very great reaſon it ſhould be ſo, becauſe this gives Authority and Efficacy to all the Methods of Salvation: It will make Sinners afraid not to be ſaved by him, when they know that he muſt judge them.

As to ſhew this particularly: It will give great Authority to his Laws and Counſels, and great Credit to his Promiſes and Threatnings.

1. It will give great Authority to his Laws and Counſels, to remember that our Law-giver will be our Judge; that he who came into the World in Human Nature to declare the Will of God to us, ſhall come again to judge us by that Goſpel which he preached. When God ſends his Prophets to us, there is great reaſon to reverence the Authority of God in them; but much more when our Judge comes to preach to us himſelf, for we may be ſure he will not preach in vain: the Laws he preached to us at his firſt coming, ſhall be the Rule whereby he will judge us at his ſecond coming.

Eſpecially when we conſider, that both our Prophet and our Judge is the Saviour of Mankind. We may poſſibly flatter our ſelves, that when God comes to Judgment, he may relax ſomewhat of the Rigor and Severity of his Laws; that he has reſerved to himſelf a liberty of diſpenſing with our Obedience to thoſe Laws, which by his Prophets he commanded us to obey: but we cannot think that our

our Saviour would lay any unneceſſary Burden on us, that he would require any thing of us under the pain of Damnation, but what he expects we ſhould do; that he will diſpenſe with the Terms of the Goſpel, which are themſelves a Diſpenſation with the Rigor of the Law; for there muſt be an end of diſpenſing ſomewhere, unleſs Grace can diſpenſe away all our Duty, and diſpenſe unreformed and impenitent Sinners into Heaven: If this could be done, there was no reaſon why the Saviour of the world ſhould have preached at all, or have given any Laws to mankind, if he would have no regard to them in judging the world; but if the Judge of the world become a Preacher, it concerns us diligently to hearken to him; for whether we will obey his Laws or no, we ſhall be judged by them.

2. This gives great Credit to his Promiſes and Threatnings, when they are made by our Judge himſelf who has Authority to execute them: Has Chriſt promiſed Pardon of Sin to all true Penitents? Has he promiſed to raiſe our Dead Bodies out of the Grave immortal and glorious, to beſtow a Crown and Kingdom on us? then we may depend on it, that he will do what he has promiſed; for *he who has promiſed is able alſo to perform:* He has Authority to forgive Sins, to raiſe the Dead, to receive all his Diſciples into Heaven, into the immediate Preſence of God, there to live and to rejoice for ever; and when he who came to ſave us, and has promiſed this great Salvation to us, has Power to give it, when he who has made theſe Promiſes, has the diſpoſal

posal of Life and Glory, and Heaven in his own hands; this is a mighty Encouragement to us to be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

And have not all impenitent Sinners as much reason to expect that Christ will certainly execute that Vengeance on them which he has threatned? that he will condemn them to eternal Night and Darkness, to Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, where there is Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth for evermore? For he is the Judge of the world, who has Power and Authority to do it, and has declared that he will do it; and then we have reason to take his word for it.

Men are apt to shelter themselves from the Terrors of the Law, by the Merits and Mediation, and Mercies of a Saviour: God indeed is very just and severe, a consuming Fire; and who can abide his coming! But the Blessed Jesus is a merciful and compassionate Saviour: He is so; infinitely merciful; but yet this merciful Saviour has threatned Everlasting Fire against incorrigible Sinners; and he is our Judge too; and if he will condemn us at the Last Day, What hope is there for us? Where shall we find another Saviour to deliver us? It seems he is not all Mercy, as Sinners are apt to flatter themselves: No; he is a Judge, and a terrible Judge: And if our Saviour will judge us, it is dangerous to neglect so great Salvation.

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That God did not intend merely to fright Sinners with his Threatnings, is evident from the Sufferings of our Saviour: He could not ſave us without making Attonement and Expiation for our Sins; and if he muſt undergo the Curſe of the Law, if he muſt ſuffer Death to redeem Sinners, it is certain Sinners muſt have died, if Chriſt had not died for them; as St. *Paul* argues, *If one died for all, then were all dead.* For would God have laid the Puniſhment of our Sins on Chriſt, if he had not intended to execute the Curſe of the Law againſt Sinners? Would he have delivered up Chriſt to Death for us, if he had not intended that Sinners ſhould dye without a Sacrifice?

And when the Saviour of the world, who came to lay down his Life for us, to redeem us from the Curſe of the Law, threatens everlaſting Deſtruction againſt impenitent and unbelieving Sinners, what reaſon have we to hope that he will not execute his Threatnings? Thoſe who are not redeemed by his death, muſt dye themſelves; and it cannot be otherwiſe expected, but that he who died to ſave us, will execute the Sentence of Eternal Death on all thoſe who will not be ſaved by him. When he comes to Judgment he will remember the Shame and Agony, the Infamy and Torments of the Croſs, which he underwent for Sinners; and this will make him revenge the Contempt of his dying and ſuffering Love: He ſuffered for Sin once; and though he were the Son of God, he bowed, and ſweat, and died under the weight of it; but all this is deſpiſed by Sinners, and goes for nothing; and now he will dye no more for them;

them; but they ſhall dye for themſelves, ſhall feel the weight of God's Wrath themſelves, ſhall ſweat, and groan, and dye under it to Eternity.

II. It is very fitting and congruous, that the Man Chriſt Jeſus, who is the Saviour, ſhould be the Judge of the world; and that upon three accounts: 1. This is a very fitting Reward of his Humiliation and Sufferings. 2. It gives great advantage to the Future Judgment, that the Son of Man is the Judge of Mankind. 3. It adds to the Glory, and Triumph, and Terror of that Day, to have a viſible Judge.

1. The Glory and Authority of a Judge is a very proper and fitting Reward of Chriſt's Humiliation and Sufferings: He became Man to ſave Mankind; though *he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet he made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of man: And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, 2. Phil. 6, 7, 8.

This was a very low Condeſcention for the Son of God, to conceal his Eternal Majeſty under ſo mean a Diſguiſe of Fleſh and Blood; to become Man as we are; to ſubmit to all the weakneſſes and infirmities of Human Nature; to chuſe a low and mean Fortune; to be treated with Contempt and Infamy, and to dye a painful and accurſed Death upon the Croſs. All this he ſubmitted to, in obedience to his Father's

Father's Will, for the Redemption of Mankind; but it was not fitting this Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhould always lye under an Eclypſe, he muſt break forth at laſt with a new and ſurprizing Glory; the World muſt ſee what a great and excellent Perſon he was, who came to viſit them in great Humility, who *took upon him the form of a ſervant*, and was *deſpiſed and rejected of men*; *a man of ſorrow, and acquainted with grief*: And therefore *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name*; *that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*; *and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, That Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the father*, verſ. 10, 11. Chriſt is now exalted to the Right-hand of God, as a Reward of his Humiliation and Sufferings, and appears in the true Glory of an Incarnate God; but his Glory is now viſible only to the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven. Thoſe who deſpiſed him, perſecuted him, ſpit on him, and nailed him to the Croſs; thoſe who in all Ages ſince have derided the Crucified Jeſus, and ſcorned his Religion and Worſhip, ſee nothing of his Glory; but when he comes to judge the world, then his Glory and Power ſhall be viſible to all; this will put an end to the Reproach of the Croſs, and turn it into ſurprize and wonder, when they ſhall ſee what a Glorious Perſon he is, who ſubmitted to ſo infamous a Death.

When he came into the world, he appeared as other men do, as mean as the meaneſt men, cloathed with a mortal Body of Fleſh and Blood,

Blood, without any external Splendor of Birth or Fortune to recommend him; but when this Son of Man ſhall return again to judge the world, his external Appearance will then be glorious, ſo bright and tranſplendent, that he will eclypſe the Sun, as the Sun does the leſſer Lights of Heaven; then God will be as viſible in him, as Man was on earth, and ſhine through Human Nature, as the Soul does through the Body; that an Incarnate God will be as viſible as a Man: Human Nature will no longer veil and conceal the Glory of the Godhead, but ſhall bear all the viſible Impreſſions of the Deity, and appear with the Awful Majeſty of God: And this is a proper Reward for his mean appearance on earth; for when God becomes Man, though there may be wiſe Reaſons why he ſhould conceal himſelf in Human Nature for a while, yet it cannot and ought not to be always ſo; but if God becomes Man, he will at one time or other make his Glory viſible to all the world in Human Nature.

It was a low and vile ſubmiſſion for the Son of God to be arraigned as a Malefactor before *Pontius Pilate*, to be falſly accuſed, unjuſtly condemned, made a Mock King, buffeted, ſcourged, reviled with the moſt bitter and inſulting Scorn, and nailed upon the Croſs betwixt two Thieves; but the Scene will be changed when he comes to judge the world; when his Crown of Thorns ſhall be bright Rays of Glory; when the Wound in his Side, and the Print of the Nails in his Hands and Feet, ſhall be Springs and

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Fountains of Light; when his Croſs ſhall be turned into a Triumphant Chariot and Throne of Judgment; and his Judge and Accuſers, and all the Enemies and Deſpiſers of his Croſs, ſhall ſtand trembling before him: This is the Triumph of the Crucified Jeſus, this is the Reward of his Infamy and Death, and a proper Reward it is, to make him the Judge of the World, who was judged and condemned himſelf by Sinners.

The firm belief and perſuaſion of this now, That God has made him the Judge both of the Quick and Dead, takes away the Shame of the Croſs: Let who dare mock at it, we do not bluſh to own our ſelves the Worſhippers of the Crucified Jeſus, *who ſuffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried*; for *him God raiſed from the dead, and hath made him both Lord and Chriſt.* We can read the Hiſtory of his Arraignment and Condemnation, without taking offence at his Sufferings, (*though a Chriſt crucified was to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*) becauſe by an Eye of Faith we now ſee him advanced to the Right hand of God, cloathed with Majeſty and Power, and expect ſhortly to ſee him come again in the Clouds of Heaven to judge the world. Thus the Primitive Chriſtians defended themſelves againſt the Reproaches of *Jews* and *Heathens*, and thus we may to this Day defend our ſelves againſt the Scoffs of Atheiſts and Infidels: For a Crucified Jeſus will appear a very glorious Prince when he comes to judge the world.

It

It is very fitting, as you heard before, that the Saviour of Mankind ſhould be the Judge of the world; and it made it reaſonable for our Saviour to ſubmit to ſuch an ignominious Death for the Salvation of Mankind; when the Ignominy of the Croſs ſhould be rewarded and done away by the Glory and Triumph of the Laſt Judgment; and therefore the Apoſtle tells us, That *for the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down on the right hand of God*, 12. Heb. 1, 2.

2. It gives great Advantage to the Future Judgment, that the Son of Man ſhall judge the world, he who became Man, that he might be the Saviour of Mankind: For the very appearance of the Son of Man to judge the world, will convince all men of the Juſtice, Equity, and Compaſſion of the Laſt Judgment; and then God will be glorified in judging the world, when Men and Angels ſhall ſee and acknowledge the Juſtice and Equity of it. Now,

1. What could Mankind have deſired more, had they had the choice of their own Judge, than to be judged by a Man? by a juſt, and good, and compaſſionate Man: It is a formidable thing to be judged by God, who is a Pure and Holy Being; and who ſo holy, that he dares appear before his Tribunal? *He chargeth his angels with folly, and the heavens are not clean in his ſight*: But we are apt to expect a more favourable Judgment from a Man who has a kindneſs for Human Nature,

ture, who is ſenſible of the Follies, Temptations, and Infirmities of it, who will not judge us as if we were Angels, or unbodied Spirits; but will remember that we are men, that we are the Race of Apoſtate man, that we have a corrupt Nature within, a tempting World, and a tempting Devil without.

If this then will ſatisfy us, God has appointed a Man for our Judge; one who is our Brother, *Fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone*; one who has ſuffered, and has been tempted as we are; who has lived in the midſt of a wicked world, and knows the Converſation of Mankind, how eaſily men are turned aſide by Example, and Perſuaſion, and Intereſt, by Fears and Flatteries; and has a great Pity for the Weakneſſes of men, and will make all favourable allowances for them.

Nay, more than this, we have not only a Man, but God-Man for our Judge; a God perſonally united to Human Nature. All Mankind have a great perſuaſion of God's Goodneſs, that the kindeſt and moſt compaſſionate man in the world falls infinitely ſhort of the Goodneſs of God: But they are afraid of his Holineſs, and of his Juſtice; that theſe Attributes will not ſuffer him to make ſufficient Allowances for the Weakneſs of Human Nature: On the other hand, tho men know enough to pity each others Infirmities, yet they are not always the moſt favourable Judges to one another; in reaſon it ſhould be ſo, that thoſe who are expoſed to the ſame Temptations themſelves, who feel the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of Human Nature, ſhould pity thoſe

who are overcome by them; but it is not always so, and therefore we cannot always rely on it: But when God becomes Man, we have all the Goodness of God, and all the tender Compassion of a Man, in their utmost Perfection; that when God-Man is our Judge, if either God or Man can help us, we are safe; no man need be afraid of such a Judge, who has not out-sinned the Mercies of a God, and the tender Compassions of a Man; and he who has, must perish, and the most merciful man must vindicate the Justice of God in it.

Especially, 2. When we remember that this Man is the Saviour of Mankind: He who is our Judge became Man, that he might be our Saviour; and can we desire a more equal and favourable Judge than the Saviour of Mankind? We may be sure he has all the Kindness for us that we can desire: It was a mighty Love to Human Nature which brought him from Heaven, and cloathed him with Flesh and Blood, and exposed him to all the Miseries and Sufferings of this Life, for our sakes; and when he did and suffered all this for us, can we suspect he will be a severe and unequal Judge? That he who died for Sinners, will condemn any Sinners whom he can save? Has he then forgot his Agony and bloody Sweat, his Cross and Passion? Has he forgot that Love which brought him into the World, and which nailed him to the Cross, for the Salvation of Sinners? We need not doubt but the Saviour of Mankind is more strongly inclined to save

ſave than to deſtroy: Than to deſtroy, did I ſay! far be it from the great Lover of Souls, that he ſhould have any inclination to deſtroy: This is foreign to his Deſign, this is againſt his Will, this is a force upon his Nature and Government; he is Incarnate and Embodied Love; Mercy is the Temper and Complexion, the Glory and Triumph of his Kingdom, and therefore none ſhall eternally periſh, but thoſe whom Infinite and Incarnate Love cannot ſave.

For we muſt remember, that he has now purchaſed us with his own Blood, that he has an Intereſt in us; that every Sinner he condemns, he pronounces Sentence againſt himſelf; he rejects what might have been, and what he paſſionately deſired ſhould have been his own; and therefore we may be certain he will condemn none, whom according to the moſt favourable Conſtruction of the Terms of the Goſpel, he can ſave: I ſay we may be as certain of this, as we are (to allude to ſome Parables of our Saviour) that a man who has travelled into the Wilderneſs to find a loſt Sheep, will bring it home upon his Back rejoicing, and not leave it to periſh there, when he has found it; or that a Woman who ſought diligently for her loſt Groat, and rejoiced at the finding of it, will not immediately fling it away again; or that a Father who has received his Prodigal Son with all the Feſtival Expreſſions of Joy, will not immediately turn him out of his Family to ſeek his Fortune: No, Chriſt has ſhed his Blood for us all, and the more he ſaves, the greater Re-

ward he has of his Sufferings, the more numerous his Train and Retinue of Redeemed Souls is, and Numbers add to the Glory of the Triumph: This may convince all mankind how merciful our Judge will be; and if we must be judged at all, could God do more for us, than to appoint the Man Christ Jesus, who is our Saviour, to be our Judge?

But then consider on the other hand, what a terrible thing will it be, to be condemned by the Man Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world! What Tumults and Convulsions of Thoughts must such Sinners labour under! They must be self-condemned; they must feel all the Agonies of Guilt and Despair: For if they could reasonably excuse themselves, or the most merciful man in the world could excuse them, their Judge would excuse them too. I know not how to bear the thoughts of this, the very imagination of it amazes and confounds me! To be damned is a tolerable Punishment, in comparison of being damned by the Saviour of the world: And might I have been saved? will such a Sinner say: Did my Saviour, who is now my Judge, a terrible Judge, shed his Blood for me? Did he purchase Heaven for me? And does he now condemn me to Hell, and deservedly too, against his own Inclinations, tho he lose the Purchase of his Blood by it? O Wretch that I am! might I have been saved? And must I be damned, and damned by the Saviour of the world! What Fury and Passion will accompany these thoughts, is not to be expressed by words; and I pray God none of us may ever feel it.

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3. Another thing which made it ſo fitting and congruous that the Son of Man ſhould judge the World, is, That he will be a viſible Judge: It is very fitting the World ſhould be viſibly judged; for without this, all the Pomp and Triumph of Judgment; nay, ſome of the principal Ends of Judgment are loſt: God judges the World in ſo publick a manner, to convince the World of his Power, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs, in the final deſtruction of all Bad men, and in the final Rewards of Virtue; and therefore this muſt be a viſible Judgment, and then there muſt be a viſible Judgment-Seat, and a viſible Judge, a viſible Glory and Power: Bad men muſt know for what they are judged, and ſee the Hand that executes Vengeance on them, or, for ought I know, they might go Atheiſts and Infidels to Hell; and ſee no more of God in a fired World, than they do in Plague, or Sword, or Famine, or ſuch other Judgments as God ſends upon the Earth: They might curſe their hard Fate, but neither accuſe themſelves, nor own the Divine Power and Juſtice: And could they ſink into Hell, without owning the Being and Juſtice of God, or acknowledging their own Guilt and Deſerts, and accuſing themſelves as the Authors of their own Miſery and Deſtruction; God would loſe the Glory of his Juſtice and Power, and Hell it ſelf would be a very tolerable place to Sinners; there would be Fire there to burn them, but no Worm to gnaw their Conſciences, no inward Furies to torment them: The Juſtice of the Laſt Judgment, which will ſtop the Mouths of

Sinners, and make them confeſs their own Guilt and Deſerts, will make the Flames of Hell ſo furiouſly rage and devour.

So that it is neceſſary that the Laſt Judgment ſhould be executed by a viſible Judge, that it may not be thought the Effect of Chance and Accident, or Fate, but the Reſult of the Divine Wiſdom and Counſel; that the world may ſee and know, that God is come to judge them, and to take Vengeance on all the Workers of Iniquity; and this alſo makes the Son of Man a very proper Judge of Mankind, becauſe he is a viſible God, and can appear in a viſible Glory, and as viſibly judge the world, as any earthly Prince or Judge when he aſcends the Judgment-ſeat.

This will be the Glory of that Day, to ſee the viſible Appearance of the Son of Man in the Clouds of Heaven, attended with Myriads of Angels to his Throne of Glory, where he ſits encircled with the Heavenly Hoſt, and all Mankind ſtanding before his Tribunal, expecting their Final Doom from his mouth: Good Lord! how will ſuch a Sight as this affect us! Could we but paint a lively Image and Repreſentation of Judgment upon our Fancies, how would it warm our Hearts! how would it diſparage all the pompous Pageantry of this World! how would it revive the Spirits of Good men, inſpire them with Courage and Reſolution, with Zeal and Activity in ſerving Chriſt, *looking for that bleſſed hope and glorious appearance of the great God, and our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt!* What terror would the

the Thoughts of it ſtrike into Sinners! how would it cool the Heat of Luſt! how would it make their Countenance change, and looſen the Joints of their Loins, and make their Knees knock one againſt another, like the Hand-writing upon the Wall, while they are carouſing in their full Bowls, and drinking away the Thoughts of God and Judgment!

Who can poſſibly conceive the Joy and Exultation of that Day, when Good men ſhall ſee their Lord coming in the Clouds of Heaven, cloathed with a Human Body, but bright and glorious as the Sun; a Body which ſtill retains the Marks of his Sufferings, and the Tokens of his Love!

How will it tranſport us, to ſee him whom our Soul loveth! to ſee him whom we have ſo paſſionately longed and deſired to ſee! To ſee him whom we love though we have not ſeen him! To ſee him, I ſay, not as the Shepherds did, a poor helpleſs Infant, wrapped in Swadling-Clouts, and lying in a Manger; to ſee him, not arraigned for a Malefactor, nor hanging in a ſhameful manner upon the Croſs, but to ſee him in all his Majeſty and Glory, to ſee him a Triumphant Conqueror and Judge, to ſee him with Crowns and Lawrels in his hands, and in him to ſee the Certainty of our Faith, the Completion of our Hopes, the Rewards of our Patience and Sufferings, and our final Conqueſt over Death and Hell! O joyful Day, when this Royal Bridegroom ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, to meet his Spouſe the Church, to conduct her to

his Father's House, there to see, and there to partake in his Glory, and never to part more.

Methinks I see holy and devout Souls in the highest Raptures and Extasies of Joy, embracing and comforting one another at the Appearance of their Lord: Here comes the Blessed Jesus; it is he himself, the true Image of God, the very Brightness of his Father's Glory: This is that blessed Day we have so long expected and hoped for; let us go forth and meet him; let us hasten into the Embraces of our Saviour: He is come to Judgment, but let those tremble at Judgment, who are afraid of the Judge: We are his, he has bought us with his Blood; he has renewed and sanctified us by his Spirit, and now he is come to own us in the presence of Men and Angels, to bestow a Kingdom on us, to receive us to himself, that where he is, we may be also, and behold his Glory.

But then on the other hand, consider, I beseech you, what a terrible Sight this will be to Bad men, who have laughed at the Fable of a Crucified Jesus, and mocked at a Future Judgment: And is he come, will such a Sinner say? And must I be judged at last, when I thought my self so secure of Judgment! Behold I see him, and can be an Infidel no longer! Lord, what Terror is there in his Looks! How do his Eyes flame with Vengeance! Who can abide the Day of his Wrath! How can I appear before him as my Judge, whom I would not have for my Saviour! What account

account can I give of my Actions, who never expected to be called to an accouut for them! What Plea can I make for my ſelf, who would never believe, who would never be perſuaded! How ſhall I bear his Preſence, and yet whither can I fly from him! When he condemns me, to whom can I appeal from the Judge and the Saviour of the World! O Wretch that I am, who would never believe, never think of this Day, and now I muſt be condemned by the Saviour of the World!

Let theſe Thoughts then make a deep impreſſion upon our minds, before that Day comes; let us remember that the Son of Man will be our Judge, he who laid down his Life for us, he who now invites us to Repentance, he who now promiſes Pardon and Forgiveneſs to true Penitents; let this teach us to reverence his Laws, to imitate his Example, to put our whole Truſt and Confidence in his Merits and Interceſſion, That *when he cometh again in his glorious Majeſty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may riſe with him unto life immortal*; as our Church teaches us to pray.

Secondly, Let us now conſider what Aſſurance we have, that the Man Chriſt Jeſus ſhall be the Judge of the World: and of this St. *Paul* tells us, *That God hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.*

But you will ſay, How does the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, prove that he is made the Judge of the World? For that any man riſes from the dead, does not prove that he is

Judge

Judge of the World: we ſhall all riſe again the laſt Day; but not to judge, but to be judged? This is very true, and therefore if we knew no more of Chriſt, but only that he roſe again from the Dead, this would not prove him to be the Judge of the World.

But we muſt conſider, 1. That the Reſurrection of Chriſt is a great and irreſiſtible Proof of the Doctrine which he preached: this our Saviour himſelf appeals to, as the laſt Proof of his Divine *Authority*, *Deſtroy this Temple, and in three days will I raiſe it up*: And thus his Reſurrection from the Dead, proves that he is the Judge of the World, for this he expreſly taught his Diſciples, That God had *committed all judgment into his hands*; that the *Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then ſhall he reward every man according to his Works.* So that our Saviour plainly declared, That God had made him the Judge of the World; and God has confirmed his Teſtimony by raiſing him from the Dead.

2. We muſt conſider alſo, that the Reſurrection of Chriſt was his viſible Advancement into his Kingdom: then his Kingdom began, when he roſe from the Dead, then all *power was committed to him both in Heaven and in Earth*, 28. Matth. And that God has thus advanced him, was viſible to all men in the Effuſion of the Holy Spirit on the Apoſtles, on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and in thoſe wonderful Miracles which they wrought in his Name. Thus St. *Peter* tells the *Jews*, that the miraculous Effuſion of the Spirit was a viſible Proof, that

that God had advanced Chriſt into his Kingdom, 1. Acts 33. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear.* And from hence concludes, *v.* 36. *Therefore let all the Houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.* Thus upon occaſion of the Miracles the Apoſtles wrought, when they were forbid to Preach in his Name, St. *Peter* tells the Sanhedrim, *The God of our Fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a Tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Iſrael, and remiſſion of Sins, and we are his Witneſſes of theſe things; and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him,* 5. Acts 30, 31. So that when Chriſt roſe again, he took poſſeſſion of his Kingdom, and *he muſt Reign till he hath put down all Enemies under his Feet*; that is, till he hath judged the World, finally condemned all Bad men, and rewarded his faithful Diſciples, and then he ſhall give up the Kingdom again to his Father, that *God may be all in all*, 1 Cor. 15.

But beſides this, there are two viſible Effects of the Reſurrection of CHRIST, which are plain Preſages and Preludiums to a Future Judgment, The Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Nation and Policy; And the Deſtruction of the Kingdom of Darkneſs.

1. The Deſtruction of the *Jews*, for their great Sin in crucifying their Meſſias: This Chriſt foretold he would do, this is the meaning

ing of that Parable of the *noble man, who went into a far Country to receive for himself a Kingdom, and to return.* —— *But his Citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And when he returned, he said, But those mine Enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me*, 19. Luk. 12, 14, 27. And therefore when Christ had foretold the Destruction of the Temple, and his Disciples asked him, *When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the World?* Our Saviour intermixes the prophecy of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, the Fate of the *Jewish* Nation, and the last Judgment, or the end of the World; the Destruction of the *Jewish* Nation, being the beginning and the Presage of a Future Judgment, 24. *Matth.* This was a visible Act of his Justice and Power, and a fair warning to the World, what all the Enemies of Christ's Kingdom must expect.

2. The overthrow of the Devil's Kingdom in the World, is another Presage of a Future Judgment. When Christ appeared, the Devil had his Kingdom in this World, was the god of this World, and was worshipped with Divine Honours; and St. *John* tells us, *For this end the Son of God was manifest, to destroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. And Christ tells us, That the Holy Ghost, whom he would send upon his Apostles after his Resurrection from the dead, *should convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged*, 16. John 11. Where by Judgment I understand the

the final Judgment, which the Spirit ſhould convince the World of, by that viſible Judgment he would execute upon the Prince of this World: For by the preaching of the Goſpel, he *turned men from Darkneſs unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*; converted great part of the Heathen World, ſilenced their Oracles, and expoſed their gods, and their Worſhip, their Temples and their Altars to contempt.

This was a viſible Judgment of the Prince of this World: and have not Bad men reaſon to look about them, when they ſee their Prince and Captain ſo miſerably defeated? If Chriſt have already begun to execute Judgment on the Prince of this World, is not this a plain Forerunner of the final Judgment, when the Devil and his Angels, and all Bad men ſhall be condemned to eternal fire?

This aſſurance we have, That the Son of Man ſhall judge the World, that God hath raiſed him from the Dead, and thereby confirmed that Teſtimony which he gave of himſelf, advanced him to the right Hand of Power, and has already given ſome ſenſible Proofs of his Power and Juſtice, in the Overthrow of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and the Devil's Kingdom.

I ſhall only farther obſerve, That this ſenſible Proof we have, that Chriſt ſhall judge the World, is a ſenſible Proof of a Future Judgment: as certain as we are that Chriſt is riſen from the Dead, ſo certain we are of a Future Judgment; which is an abundant Confirmation

mation of all those other Arguments from Reason and Scripture, that God will judge the World.

CHAP IV.

The Manner and Circumstances of CHRIST's *Appearance, and the Awful Solemnities of Judgment.*

IV. LET us now consider the Manner and Circumstances of Christ's Appearance, and the Awful Solemnities of Judgment. I have upon several occasions hinted at most of these things already; but the Order of my Discourse requires that I should say something particularly, though briefly to them.

Now our Saviour tells us, 16. Matth. 27. *That the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels.* 9. Luke 26. *That the Son of man shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* That *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. That *the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; which shall awaken the dead, and raise them out of their Graves; but the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive*; that is, whoever shall then be alive at Christ's coming to Judgment, *shall be caught up together with*

with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord, 1. Theſſ. 4. 16, 17. That *when the Son of man cometh in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him: then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his glory; And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats*, 25. Matth. 31, 32. Or as it is deſcribed in St. *John*'s Viſions, 20. Rev. 11, 12, 13. *And I ſaw a white Throne, and him that ſat on it; from whoſe face the earth and heavens fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in tn the books, according to their works.* This gives us a general Proſpect of the Order and Solemnity of the laſt Judgment, which is very Pompous and Glorious, and very Terrible: there never was any thing like it; all the *Roman* Triumphs, in compariſon with this, were but like the Sports and Apiſh imitations of Children; let us then particularly, but briefly conſider the ſeveral Parts of it.

Chriſt ſhall come *in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels.*

In his own glory; that muſt ſignify the Glory of his Perſon, that is the Glory of an Incarnate God: His Body will be bright and glorious as the Sun: So it was when he was transfigured before them on the Mount, *His face did ſhine like the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light*, 17. Matth 2. And if there be any new degrees of Glory and Majeſty, we

we may be sure he will appear in it all, when he comes to Judgment. The Scripture assures us, that Christ is now clothed with a glorious Body; and that at the Resurrection *he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like to his own most glorious body:* and he himself tells us, *At that day the righteous shall shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father:* And if he bestows such Glory on his meanest Members, how glorious will the Head be? for St. *Paul* assures us, That there are very different degrees of Glory; *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead,* 1 Cor. 15. 41, 42. With what Glory then will our Lord appear, when he comes to Judgment? If the Righteous shall shine forth like the Sun, how bright will the Son of Righteousness himself be? If meer Creatures shall appear so glorious, what will the Glory of an Incarnate *God* be? for he will not then appear as a glorious Creature, but as a visible *God*; as I observed before, his *Godhead will shine* through his glorified Humanity, as visible as our Souls do through our Bodies: And how glorious must that Body be, in which the Deity appears! a Glory which distinguishes a *God* from the most glorious Creatures.

3. Phil. 12.

13. Mat. 43.

But he must appear in the *Glory of his Father* also: that is, as I understand it, with the Authority of an Universal Judge: this is a great Glory; for Authority and Power carries Reverence and Majesty with it: Whatever mens personal Qualifications are, though upon all other

other accounts they are much inferior to their Neighbours; yet the Character of a Judge makes them Venerable, especially to those who must be judged by them. Authority is an invisible Character, but yet gives a visible Majesty; it is apt to impose upon our Judgments of Persons, that we hardly think them the same men when they are in Authority and out of it: And if an ordinary Judge of Assize be lookt on with so much Reverence and Awe, What is the Glory and Majesty of an Universal Judge? How will all the World fall, and bow, and tremble before him, who with the Word of his mouth can sentence them to Eternal Life or Death? This is *his Father's glory*, for he is the Natural Lord and Judge of the World, and from him he receives this Authority to judge the World; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, 5. John 22. 23. To this Glory he is now advanced, and we must now Obey, and Reverence, and Adore him as our Judge; but it will give a visible Majesty to him, when he thus comes in the Glory of his Father; when the astonishing Glory of his Person is still made more Glorious and Majestick by the Authority of a Judge.

But His Retinue is very glorious also, and adds to the Terror and Majesty of his Appearance; for he shall come attended with Myriads of holy Angels, bright and glorious Beings, who incircle his Person, and are the Witnesses and Ministers of his Justice.

We know a ſplendid Retinue adds greatly to the Glory of a Prince or Judge: a Multitude has ſomething great and awful in it, eſpecially when this Multitude are all his Dependants, Servants, and Miniſters; and more ſtill, when every one of this Multitude are moſt excellent and glorious Creatures, the Beauty and Perfection of the Creation, whoſe ſingle Glories we cannot now bear the ſight of, without great Apprehenſion and Amazement: And what a mighty Prince is he, who comes attended with the whole Hoſt of Heaven, who leave their Heavenly Manſions to wait upon their Lord, and to adorn his Triumphs!

But this glorious Retinue of Angels is not meerly for Pomp and State, but they are the Miniſters of his Juſtice, and therefore are called his *mighty Angels*, or the Angels of his Power, 2. *Theſſ.* 1. 8. And what a powerful Judge is he, who has all the Powers of Heaven attending him to execute his Vengeance on Devils and Bad Men?

Μετ' Αγγελων δυνάμεως αὐτῦ.

This glorious Judge ſhall at the laſt Day come down from Heaven, for thither he aſcended after his Reſurrection from the Dead, and there he muſt continue till he comes to judge the World: But then *the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God*, 2 Theſſ. 4. 16. I ſee no reaſon why this ſhould not be underſtood literally, of an audible Voice and Shouting, and an audible ſound of the laſt Trumpet to ſummon all mankind to Judgment; for this makes the Appearance more ſolemn and awful; and thus *God* deſcended

ded on Mount *Sinai*, when he gave the Law, *With thundrings and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; ſo that all the people that was in the camp, trembled*, 19. Exod. 16. And if he gave the Law with the ſound of a Trumpet, why not judge the World with it too?

This Shout is the ſhouting of the holy Angels, begun by the Voice of the Archangel in their deſcent with Chriſt; and ſignifies what ſuch Shoutings do among men, either great Joy and Exultation, or Alacrity and Courage: Thus men ſhout for Joy when any thing happens which highly pleaſes them; thus Soldiers ſhout when the ſignal is given for Battel.

Thus when our Lord ſhall ſay, Come ye holy Angels, go down with me to judge the World; they will ſhout for joy that that Day is come, which will put a final end to the Kingdom of Darkneſs; when the Devil and his Angels, and all Wicked men ſhall be caſt into the Lake of Fire; and Good men rewarded, and crowned, and received into the immediate Preſence of *God* in Heaven. For this is matter of Joy to all Holy Angels, to ſee the final Conqueſt of all the Enemies of CHRIST's Kingdom; to ſee the Triumphs of Juſtice, to ſee all Impiety and Wickedneſs ſhamed, condemned, and puniſhed, and the World cleanſed from the Pollutions of it: To ſee their numbers encreaſed by the advancement of Good men into Heaven, who will now be united to their Company, and join with them *in ſinging Hallelujahs to Him that ſit-*

teth on the Throne, and to the Lamb; for if there be joy in Heaven at the Repentance of one Sinner, what Exultation and Acclamation will there be, to see the whole number of GOD's Elect raised again with glorious Bodies, and receive that Kingdom which was prepared for them before the Foundations of the World!

When our Lord shall say, Come ye holy Angels, and be the Ministers of my Justice, and execute my Vengeance upon a Wicked World, upon the Devil and all Bad men, and gather together mine Elect from the four Corners of the Earth; with what Shoutings will they receive their Commission? With what Alacrity and Courage will they execute it? For so our Saviour himself represents it, that the Angels are not meerly Attendants of State, but his Officers and Ministers whom he employs in judging the World: Thus he expounds the Parable of the Tares, 13. Matth. 41, 42, 43. *He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man: The field is the world: The good seed are the Children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one: The Enemy that sowed them is the Devil: The harvest is the end of the world: And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the World. The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels; And they shall gather forth out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the*

the righteous ſhine forth like the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father. And thus he expounds the Parable of the Net, *that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind. Which, when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into Veſſels, and the bad they caſt away. So ſhall it be at the end of the World: the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt; and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth,* v. 47, 48, 49, 50.

What is meant by *the Trump of God*, with which Chriſt deſcends from Heaven, is hard to ſay; only thus much we know, that it is ſuch a Trumpet, at the ſound of which the Dead ſhall riſe; as St. *Paul* expreſly tell us, 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. *Behold I ſhew you a Myſtery; We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump, (for the trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.* And therefore this laſt Trump ſeems to be what our Saviour calls *the voice of the Son of God*, 5. John 25, 28, 29. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live.* Which may indeed be underſtood of a Metaphorical or Spiritual Death and Reſurrection, that thoſe who were dead in Sin, ſhould be raiſed to a new Spiritual Life by hearing the Voice of the Son of God, and believing on him; but though our Saviour might in-

tend this sense, yet he meant somewhat more by it, as appears from what follows: *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* So that the voice of Christ shall raise the Dead, which may well be called the Trump of God, when it shall sound through all the World, and give a new life to the Dead, and summon 'em to Judgment.

For this is another very material Circumstance of the Future Judgment, That all the Dead, both Good and Bad, shall be raised to Life again, and appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ: that as we must give an account of whatever we have done in this Body, whether Good or Bad, so we must re-assume our Bodies again when we come to Judgment. I shall not now discourse to you of the Nature or Possibility of the Resurrection, which belongs to another Argument; but the Man Christ Jesus is the Judge of Mankind, he appears in Human Nature himself, cloathed with an Human Body, though infinitely bright and glorious; and he comes to judge Men, not unbodied Souls, and therefore we must be re-united to our Bodies again, for a Human Soul is not a perfect man without its Body. An unbodied Soul is guilty of none of those Sins for which we must be judged, for we must be judged for what

what we did in the body; the man ſinned, and the man muſt be judged, and the man muſt be either happy or miſerable for ever.

Lord! with what Horror and Reluctancy will bad Souls enter into their Bodies again; not to enjoy their old beloved Senſualities, but to be judged for them! when the very ſight of their Bodies ſhall call to mind all the Villanies they acted in them; when they muſt appear before their Judge, with all the Inſtruments of Wickedneſs about them; with thoſe very Bodies *whoſe Members they had made ſervants of uncleanneſs, and to iniquity unto iniquity*: With Eyes full of Adultery, with Hands ſtained with Blood, or full of Bribes or Rapine, with a blaſpheming, a lying, a reviling, a perjured Tongue; to unite a Soul to ſuch a Body again, is like tying a man to his murdered Friend, which will both ſcare and torment his Conſcience, and poiſon him with a noiſom Stench. The Body which was the Tempter and the Inſtrument in all this Wickedneſs, will now be a Witneſs againſt him, and an Inſtrument of his Puniſhment too.

But holy Souls will give a better Welcome to their Bodies, Bodies in which the Fleſh was ſubdued to the Spirit; which were preſerved pure and clean from all ſenſual Luſts, which were the ready Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs and Virtue, which were offered up living, holy, and acceptable Sacrifices to God; which ſuffered Loſs, and Want, and Torment, and Death for the ſake of Chriſt; Good men would deſire to be judged in ſuch

Bodies as these, which are visible Testimonies of their Faith, and Patience, and Mortification, and Self-denial, which are the Members of Christ, and the Temples of the Holy Ghost.

Thus all Mankind shall rise out of their Graves, and appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ; and therefore now let us Contemplate our Lord, sitting upon his Throne, the Throne of Judgment, as he himself tells us, 25. Matth. 31. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.* Thus it is described in the Revelations of St. *John*, 20. Revel. 13. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.* What this Throne is, or where it shall be placed, we are not told; but the most probable Conjecture is, that this Throne is a bright resplendent Cloud in the form of a Magnificent Throne, placed in the Air, at some distance from the Earth; for he is said to come in the Clouds of Heaven; and St. *Paul* plainly intimates to us, that his Throne shall be in the Air, when he tells us, that those Good men, who shall be alive at Christ's coming, *shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air*; and it is not improbable, but this may be near *Jerusalem*, where the Temple of God was, where he conversed while he lived on Earth, and where he was judged and condemned as a Malefactor, and treated with the utmost Scorn and Contempt, and nailed

nailed in an infamous manner upon the Croſs; for it ſeems to add to the triumph of that Day, to appear in all his Glory to judge the World, at that very place where he ſuffered Shame, and Reproach, and Death, for the Sins of men, and from the hands of Sinners. But this is all Conjecture (though not without ſome appearing Probability), and therefore I ſhall build nothing on it.

The Judge being ſat, all Mankind appear before him, to give an account of their Actions, and to receive their final Sentence: *Before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats*, 25. Matth. 32. This, as I obſerved before, our Saviour attributes to the Miniſtry of Angels, who ſeparate the Wheat from the Tares, and the good Fiſh from the bad: For *the angels* we know *are miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*, 1. Heb. 14. and therefore they know how to diſtinguiſh between Good and Bad men, and to ſeparate them from each other.

This is the laſt and final Separation; Good and Bad men ſhall never meet and intermix with each other after this: They live together in this world, and converſe together, are united by Relation and Intereſt; are Members of the ſame Church, and worſhip God together in the ſame Holy Communion of Prayers and Sacraments; but they muſt part Company at the Day of Judgment; the one to the Right hand, and the other to the Left: Men are very apt to flatter them-

themselves now, that they shall fare the better for the Company they keep; no Church, and no Communion is pure enough for them; not that they are so much holier than their Neighbours, but they are of opinion, that God will judge of them by the Church they are of; and therefore whatever Church strikes their Fancy most with an appearance of Sanctity and Holiness, there they join themselves, not so much to be made better by their Company, as to escape the better with them: But they should remember, that the Tares and the Wheat grow together in the same Field, but yet have a very different end; the one is gathered into the Barn, and the other is burnt; and that good and bad Fish are taken in the same Net, but they are separated at the Day of Judgment: All our Separations now will avail us nothing, unless we take care to be found in the number of Christ's Sheep when we come to Judgment; for if we be concealed Hypocrites, and rotten and corrupt Members of a Sound and Orthodox and Pure Church, though we have conversed with Good men all our Lives here, yet we must part Company at last; *the angels at that day will gather forth out of Christ's kingdom and church all things which offend, and work iniquity.*

The Judge being thus seated on his Throne, and all Mankind before him, the Books are opened; which is another Circumstance to be considered in the last Judgment, 20. *Revel.* 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened: And ano-*

nother book was opened, which is the book of life: And the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works. The like we have, 7. *Dan.* 10.

This opening of the Books ſeems to be an Alluſion to the Form of Proceſs in Human Judicatures; for we cannot think that God keeps Books of Record in a literal ſenſe, as men do; for ſuch Books are only Helps to Memory, and therefore God needs them not: But this repreſents to us the exact and impartial Juſtice of the Laſt Judgment; for there are two ſorts of Books which ſhall be opened, and out of which we ſhall be judged: 1. The Laws of God, which are the Rule of our Actions, by which we ſhall be judged. 2. The Records of our Lives and Actions, which contain the Matters of Fact, or that for which we ſhall be judged. I ſhall diſcourſe more particularly of this hereafter, and ſhall only obſerve at preſent, that God is a curious Obſerver of all our Actions, and keeps a faithful Record of them; though we take little notice of our ſins our ſelves, and forget them preſently, and then think they are gone and paſt, yet God remembers them, and we ſhall find fair and freſh Records of them, when we come to Judgment: And how will it amaze and confound Bad men, to ſee all the Sins of their Lives called to remembrance; to ſee a black Catalogue of all their Impieties and Blaſphemies, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, Uncleanneſs and Impurities; to ſee an exact Counterpart of a moſt wicked and

and ungodly Life! Nothing can blot our Sins out of God's Book, but a sincere Repentance and Reformation of our Lives: For then God has promised to *blot out all our iniquities*, which is somewhat more than crossing the Accompt; for when the Accompt is only crossed, it is visible still; but what is blotted out, don't so much as appear; it no longer stands upon Record, it is forgot, and shall never be alledged against us; there shall be no mention made of it at the Day of Judgment; for St. *John* tells us there is another Book shall be opened, the Book of Life, out of which Good men shall be judged, which records their Faith, and Patience, and Charity, and all the Good they have done; but none of their Sins, which God has blotted out of his Remembrance, and has promised to keep no Record of them. And is not this a mighty encouragement to true Repentance, that all our Sins shall be blotted out before the Day of Judgment, that there shall be no mention, no remembrance of them then?

Some very Good men have been guilty of very great Wickednesses, which it may be none but God and their own Consciences know; and the best men have so many Failings, Weaknesses, Miscarriages, that should all the Sins of Good men be exposed to the View and Censure of Men and Angels at the Day of Judgment, though they were finally absolved and acquitted, yet it would cause great Shame and Confusion, and overcast the Glory of that Day; but their Sins are done away and forgot, and they have washed their

their Garments, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb: This is the only way to conceal your moſt ſecret Sins, to blot them out of God's Book by Repentance; for if they remain there upon Record, how ſucceſsful ſoever you may be in concealing them at preſent, the Books will be opened at the Day of Judgment, and then all the World will know them.

Thus in our Saviour's Account of the laſt Judgment, none of the Sins which Good men ever committed, are mentioned, but only the Graces and Virtues for which they are rewarded; nor is there any notice taken of any good Actions done by Bad men, but only of their Sins, 25. *Matthew*, as God expreſly declares it ſhall be, 32. Ezek. 13, 14, 16. *When I ſhall ſay to the righteous, that he ſhall ſurely live; if he truſt to his own righteouſneſs* (to the good he hath already done) *and commit iniquity, all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he ſhall dye for it. Again, when I ſay to the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely dye, if he turn from his ſin, and doth that which is lawful and right:* —— *None of his ſins that he hath committed, ſhall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live.*

And now let us conſider in what order Chriſt will judge the World: When he has ſeparated between the Sheep and the Goats, between Good and Bad men; he firſt calls Good men to Judgment, and pronounces them bleſſed, as we ſee, 25. *Matthew.* And this very much becomes the Perſon of our Judge, who is the Saviour

viour of the World, and therefore to ſave, is his proper work, and muſt take place of all Acts of Juſtice and Vengeance; the Saviour of the world, as I obſerved before, muſt be our Judge, that he may be a compleat and perfect Saviour, that he may finally acquit and reward us; and therefore this is his firſt Care, to ſeparate his Elect from the Company, and to deliver them from the Deſtruction of the Ungodly.

This demonſtrates to all the world, that God takes more pleaſure to ſave than to deſtroy; this convinces Sinners that their Deſtruction is from themſelves, that they might have been ſaved as well as others, for Chriſt came to ſave them; and they ſee now that he would have done it, would they have been ſaved by him: In the Glory which is conferred on Good men, they ſee what they have loſt, before they hear that terrible Sentence pronounced, *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire*; and this is a double Damnation, to ſee the Happineſs of Good men, and to feel their own Miſery; for when we come to Judgment, to loſe Heaven will be thought a terrible Puniſhment, tho there were no Hell; and this Puniſhment Bad men have, by being ſuffered to ſtand by, and ſee the glorious Rewards of the Righteous.

But there is a further Reaſon alſo for this: That Good men when they are acquitted and abſolved, ſhall, together with their Lord, ſit in Judgment on the wicked world: 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. *Do ye not know that the ſaints ſhall judge the world?* ——— *Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels?* How far this extends, we know not; but it

it ſeems ſuch a thing there is, as was univerſally believed in the Apoſtle's days, as appears from his Appeal to their own Knowledge of it; but if they muſt judge the world, it is reaſonable to think that their own Judgment muſt be over firſt.

I ſhall name but one thing more, which I have had ſeveral occaſions to take notice of already; and that is, That at the laſt Judgment this Earth ſhall be deſtroyed with Fire, as St. *Peter* expreſly tells us, *The day of the Lord ſhall come like a thief in the night; in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up*, 2 Peter 3. 10. This has been an old Tradition, That the World ſhall be deſtroyed by Fire; and ſome men are very curious and inquiſitive by what Natural Cauſes this may be done; for they are not willing to allow that God either made or deſtroys the world by an immediate Power; for the leſs they leave for God to do, the leſs they are concerned about him: But though it is hard to perſuade ſome men now, that there was any need of a God to make the world, which they think could make it ſelf without him; yet the Laſt Judgment ſhall convince them, That it is GOD that deſtroys it, when they ſhall ſee the world fired by a Flame ſtreaming from his Throne, as is not improbable by the Deſcription of the Prophet *Daniel, A fiery ſtream iſſued, and came forth from before him*, 7. Dan. 10.

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The only question is, Whether the World shall be fired at Christ's first appearance to Judgment, or after the Final Sentence pronounced against Bad men? The first does not seem probable, because Christ himself shall place his Throne in the Air, and all Mankind shall be gathered before him to Judgment, and a fired World is not a proper Scene for such an Appearance; and the burning of the World seems to be an Act of Judgment and Vengeance; as St. *Paul* tells us, *He shall descend from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God*, 2 Thes. 1. 8. So that the Devil and Bad men shall first be condemned to everlasting Fire, and then their Punishment shall begin in a fired World.

Thus I have given you a brief View of the Circumstances and Manner of Christ's Appearance, and the Awful Solemnities of Judgment, every part of which is for the Glory of our Lord, for the Comfort of Good men, and a Terror to the wicked. God grant we may so think of this day before-hand, that we may not feel the Terror and Astonishment of it when it comes.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Who are to be Judged, viz. *The World, or all Mankind.*

V. LET us now consider who are to be judged, and they are the World, or all Mankind: For I shall take no notice of the Judgment of the Devil and the Apostate Angels, which we know no more of, but only that they shall be judged; that *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude v. 6.

Why their Judgment is deferred so long, we cannot tell; for it is plain that the Angels fell from their first Estate before Man; and how long, we know not, for it was the Serpent that beguiled *Eve*; but this we know, that whatever their first Apostacy was, they have a great deal more to answer for now, and must expect a more terrible Condemnation: All the Sin that is in the world is originally owing to the Temptation of the Devil, who seduced our first Parents in Paradise, and has ever since been the great Tempter to Wickedness and Apostacy from God; and therefore he is in some degree entitled to all the Wickedness of Mankind.

And this is a good reason why the Devil and his Angels, and all Bad men should be judged

and condemned together, thoſe who tempt, and thoſe who are overcome by Temptations; the Prince of Darkneſs, and all his Subjects, whether Angels or Men. Hell is the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, not for Men; but when he has drawn Mankind into the Apoſtacy, it is fit they ſhould ſhare in his Puniſhments too; and when our Lord comes to judge men who have been ſeduced and corrupted by Evil Spirits, there is no reaſon to think that Wicked Spirits ſhould eſcape, who have ſeduced and tyrannized over Mankind.

But that which we are at preſent concerned in, is the Judgment of Mankind, That God hath appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World, or the whole Race of men, as St. *John* repreſents it, *I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God*, 20. Revel. 12.

No man who believes a Future Judgment, makes any doubt of this, but that all ſhall be judged: For if any, why not all? We are all alike God's Creatures, we are all equally accountable to him; and though we have very different Talents, yet we have all ſome Talent or other to improve for our Maſter's uſe: And therefore I ſhall not go about to convince any man that he is to be judged as well as the reſt of Mankind; but there are ſome Perſons who are apt to forget this, who have yet as much occaſion to think of a Future Judgment, as any other men, and therefore ought to be minded of it: And they are thoſe who are very Rich and Great, or very Poor, or in the Vigor and Gaity of Youth.

1*ſt*. Rich and Great Men, Princes and Potentates, Men of Honour and Fortune, who are exalted above the common Level of Mankind: Theſe muſt all be judged as well as the meaneſt men, though they are not very apt to think of it: Great Power and great Riches make them reverenced and adored like ſo many Deities in this World; all men court and flatter them, and make a great diſtinction between them and thoſe of a meaner Rank and Fortune; and this is apt to ſwell their Minds: They look down upon the reſt of the world as very much below them; and think they merit much whenever they look up to God: For ſuch Great men as they are to worſhip God, and lift up their Eyes ſometimes to Heaven, they imagine is ſo great an Honour to God, and credit to Religion, that a very little matter will be accepted from them: They ſee Human Judicatures very often have great Reſpect for mens Perſons in Judgment, and they hope God will conſider their Quality too, and deal with them like Princes, or Nobles, or Gentlemen; as one Unfortunate Gentleman expreſſed himſelf not many Years ſince at the Gallows; and I fear therein ſpoke the ſecret Thoughts and Hopes of many others: So that if theſe men believe they ſhall be judged, yet they perſuade themſelves that they ſhall not be judged like other men; that God will wink at their Faults, and have reſpect to their Rank and Quality, and excuſe them from the ſtrict Obſervation of thoſe Laws which were made for meaner Perſons.

I ſuppoſe you do not expect I ſhould gravely and ſeriouſly confute ſuch vain Conceits as theſe, which few men dare profeſs, and own, and defend, though they ſecretly flatter themſelves with ſuch Hopes, as is too viſible in their lives; but ſince men are apt to think ſuch things as they dare not ſpeak, it will be uſeful to ſuggeſt ſome wiſer Thoughts to them, which may prevent ſuch Imaginations, and bring the greateſt men living under the Awe and Terror of the Future Judgment.

For what a vain Imagination is it, That God will have regard to Earthly Greatneſs in judging the World! For what is this World, and all the Greatneſs and Glory of it, to him who made it? Great and ſmall are but comparative Terms, and nothing is great, when compared with that which is greater: Conſider the Glory of our Judge, as I have already repreſented it to you, when he ſhall come attended with Myriads of Angels; and then think what little creeping Worms you are to him: We may obſerve in this world, that every Rank and Degree of men appears conſiderable to thoſe below them, but thoſe above uſe them as Inferiors, and are not afraid to Judge and Correct them for their Faults; and is there not a much greater Diſtance between GOD and the greateſt Emperor, than there is between the greateſt Emperor and a petty Conſtable? Conſider the Caſe of the Apoſtate Angels, of the Devil himſelf, who is the Prince of the Power of the Air, and was a very glorious Spirit; and if as great and glorious as he was, God flung him down from Heaven for Sin, and as powerful

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as he now is, who is the God of this world, will judge and condemn him at the laſt Day; why ſhould any man think that his Power and Greatneſs, which be it what it will, can neither be compared to what the Devil was, nor to what he is, ſhould excuſe him from the Judgment of God?

And ſince you boaſt of your Power and Greatneſs, Who made you ſo? Who made you differ from the meaneſt Beggar? Who advances Princes to the Throne, and cloathes them with Glory and Majeſty? Is not *all Power of God?* Are they not his Miniſters and Servants? And is any Miniſter too great to be corrected by his Prince who made him ſo? Are not all Miniſters accountable to their Lord? And the greater their Truſt and Power is, have they not a greater Account to give? And is this a reaſon why they ſhould give none? Why they ſhould be exempted from Judgment, and from giving an Account?

But it is a wonderful thing to me, that any man ſhould glory in Power and Greatneſs, or think himſelf too big to be judged by God, or that God will have any regard to his Greatneſs in judging him; for did he but reflect upon his own ſtate and condition in this world, it would convince him what a little inconſiderable Creature he is.

As great as any man is, he is expoſed to every Accident, to all the Changes and Viciſſitudes of Fortune: God can and very often does puniſh him in this world, and then there is no reaſon to expect that he will not judge him in the next: Pain and Sickneſs ſtand in no awe of

his Greatneſs, and Death is no more afraid of him than of a Beggar: Thoſe who are *Gods on earth, muſt die like Men*; which is the Curſe and Puniſhment of Sin; and this puts an end to all their Greatneſs; for after a little Funeral Pomp is over, and they are laid in their Graves with a little more Ceremony than Meaner men, they are forſaken of all their Guards, and Retinue, and Dependants, and are left to be a Prey for Worms: And is this the Creature too great to Reverence and Worſhip God! and too big to be judged; whom Worms eat, and Beggars walk over his Grave!

This is the weak and frail ſtate of the greateſt Men on earth: They go naked and unarmed into another world, ſtript of their Power and Fortunes, of Riches and Honours, which dazzled the Eyes of men here; and when they are gone, all men ſpeak their Minds freely of them, judge their Lives and Actions, arraign their Memories, and revenge their Injuries upon their Graves; and when they are become little enough to be judged by men, ſurely they are not too big for God's Judgment: *Then the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, as well as every bond-man, and every free-man, ſhall hide themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and ſay to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* 16. Revel. 15, 16, 17.

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Conſider this ye Rich and Great men, who are ſo apt to forget God, and a Future Judgment: *Riches profit not in the day of wrath*; they cannot bribe God as they do men; no Power can prevail againſt the Almighty; proud and ſwelling Titles are mere empty Bubbles, which burſt and vaniſh into nothing in the next world: Men ye are, and ye ſhall dye like men, and ſhall be judged like men, and have much more reaſon to think of Judgment than other men have, for ye have a greater Account to give, and are in more danger of giving a very bad Account, if you do not frequently and ſeriouſly think of Judgment.

What a mighty Truſt, and a mighty Temptation are Riches, and Honour, and Power! How much good, and how much hurt, may ſuch men do in the world! And what a formidable thing is it to give an account of all the Good that we might and ought to have done, and have not, and of all the Evil we have done by the abuſe of thoſe Bleſſings of Heaven which we were intruſted with to do good.

Honour and Power always carry ſome great Duties with them; they are not merely intended to ſet ſome men above others, to command the Cap and the Knee, and external Reſpects, but they are for the good Order and Government of the World, to ſuppreſs and puniſh Wickedneſs, and to protect and encourage Innocence and Virtue; ſuch men are like the great Lights of Heaven, to direct and cheriſh the World with their Light and Influence; their Examples are viſible and conſpicuous, and carry great Authority with them; and if their

Motions be irregular and exorbitant, it proves as fatal as for the Sun to forsake the Eclyptick, and wander into unknown Regions of the Heaven, which would confound Summer and Winter, Night and Day, and bring the utmost Disorder upon Human Affairs: When Princes and Great men, who should support Religion, and punish Wickedness, are the Patrons of Atheism, Profaneness, and Immorality, and give Countenance and Reputation to it by their Examples, what Multitudes of Converts do they make! How does it give the Reins to mens ungoverned Lusts, when the Restraints of Fear and Shame are gone! How does it corrupt even virtuous and well-disposed minds, when it is a fashionable thing to be wicked, when it qualifies them for Preferments, and makes them fit for the best Company, while Virtue and Modesty is the common Subject of Drollery and Ridicule: When those who should administer Justice to the world, oppress the Poor and Fatherless, and accept the Persons of the Rich; when they pervert Judgment for a Reward, and enrich themselves with Bribes: Such an Abuse of Power will have a very heavy Account: What a dreadful thing will it be, when you come to Judgment, to be pursued with the Cries of Widows and Orphans, of ruined Families, and which is more dreadful yet, with the Curses and Execrations of murdered Souls!

The like may be said of Riches, which is but a Stewardship, and we must give an account of it: And if instead of improving a plentiful Fortune to do Good to the world, we

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ſpend it upon our Luſts, and make our ſelves Beaſts; if with the Rich man in the Goſpel, we fare deliciouſly every day, and ſuffer the Poor and Miſerable to ſtarve at our Doors, we muſt expect to hear what *Abraham* ſaid to him, *Son, remember thou hadſt thy good things in thy life-time, and Lazarus his evil things, therefore now thou art tormented and he is comforted.*

To whom much is given, of them ſhall much be required: Our Account increaſes as our Riches, and Honour, and Power does; for the more Opportunities we have of doing good, the more is expected from us; and the more we have experienced the Divine Bounty and Goodneſs, the greater Returns we owe of Duty and Gratitude; and therefore Rich and Great and Powerful men, have more reaſon to think of Judgment, than other men, becauſe they have a greater Account to give; and yet there is a greater reaſon than this too, that nothing but the frequent and ſerious Thoughts of Judgment will enable them to make a good Account.

Our Saviour tells us *how hard it is for a rich man to enter into heaven; as hard as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*: For how irreſiſtible are the Temptations of Riches and Power? Which take off all the Reſtraints of fear and ſhame, and furniſh them with all the Inſtruments and Opportunities of gratifying their Luſts.

How hard is it for men to bear Greatneſs without Pride and Inſolence? To be Rich without being covetous or luxurious? To be devout Worſhippers of GOD, when they themſelves are

are adored and flattered by men? There are very few Examples of Humility, Piety, and Devotion, Temperance and Chastity in an exalted Fortune. Prosperity is generally a greater Trial of a steddy and confirmed Virtue, than Adversity is; for it scatters our Thoughts, makes our Spirits airy and volatile, gives new Charms to the World, and kindles new Fires within; it leads us through all the various Scenes of Pleasures, and keeps up and tempts our Appetite with Varieties and fresh Delights, and entertains us so much abroad, that we can seldom retire into our selves, and converse with our own thoughts.

But would such men seriously think of Judgment, it would teach them another use of Riches and Power; it would mind them that they are but men, as other men are, all alike to God, and that they shall be judged alike; that their Riches and Power, which distinguishes them from other men, is not their own, but they are entrusted with it by God, not to domineer over their fellow-Creatures; not to *eat and drink and be drunken, and to smite their fellow-servants*, but to relieve the Poor, to defend the Injured and Oppressed, to be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, a Father to the Fatherless, and a Husband to the Widows: this is the Honour God has conferred on them, that he has made them his Ministers and Stewards, Tutelar Angels, and even Gods to men; and the way to be truly Great, is to improve their Power and Riches, to make themselves very useful to the World: To have Power and Riches is not to be great, but to do a great deal

deal of good with them; this ſets them above other men, and will prepare glorious Rewards for them: But if Power and Riches make them only more wicked than their Neighbours, all that they will get by it will be a hotter Hell.

2*dly*. Thoſe who are very Poor and Calamitous, are very apt to forget a Future Judgment, or think themſelves unconcerned in it: They are too little for Judgment, as the others were too great; what ſhould God judge them for, whom he has entruſted with little or nothing but their Skins? Who can ſpare no time to worſhip God, for all the time they have is little enough to get Bread in; Who cannot be blamed, if when they can get a little Drink they drink away Sorrow, and forget their Wants and Miſeries for ſome few Moments; or if they pilfer and ſteal or lye to get Bread; Neceſſity has no Law, and makes ſuch Actions innocent in them, as are great Crimes in other men: By ſuch kind of Excuſes as theſe, poor men excuſe away all concernment about Religion; Religion is above them; rich and happy People may be at leiſure for it, but they have enough to do to live; the Church-door they like very well, where devout and charitable People drop their Alms, but the inſide of the Church does not belong to them, and they have nothing to do there. And thus it is proportionably in leſs degrees of Poverty; every Condition of Life which may be called Poor, is apt to tempt men to be careleſs of Religion, and unmindful of a Future Judgment.

Now

Now what is to be said to these men? Shall we prove that Poor men shall be judged as well as Rich? I doubt you would think me very impertinent, should I attempt it; for if all Mankind are to be judged, the Poor must be judged too if they be men.

Are not poor men able to give an account of their Actions? And why then should they not be called to an account for them? Are they not reasonable Creatures, and able to understand, and give a reason for what they do? And why then should not God ask a reason of them? If they have nothing to give an account of, no account shall be demanded; but if they have, why should they not give an account of what they have, be it more or less? Poor men shall give no account of Riches, because they have them not; but this does not hinder, but that they may give an account of their Poverty, and those Graces which become a poor and low Fortune.

They shall not be examined about their Charity, when they had nothing to give; but they may for their Thankfulness to God, and to their Benefactors: They shall not be examined how they used their Riches, which they had not; but they may be, how they bore their Poverty; whether external Poverty has taught them true Poverty of Spirit, Humility, Modesty, Patience in Want and Sufferings, Contentment with a little, Submission to the Will of God, and a chearful Dependance on Providence for their daily Bread; whether they have constantly prayed to God for the supply of their Wants, as well as begged an Alms of men,

men, and implored the Help and Aſſiſtance of the Rich: theſe are Duties and Virtues which Poverty teaches, and which Poor men ought to exerciſe, and therefore which God may challenge from them, and judge them for.

It is a very wild Imagination, to think that Poverty will excuſe mens Pride, and Rudeneſs and Inſolence, unleſs it be a Virtue to be Proud, when men have no temptation to it, when they have nothing to be proud of.

Will Poverty excuſe Sloth and Idleneſs? when men have nothing to live by but their Hands, is that a Reaſon why they ſhould not work? When men are able to work, and get their own living, is Poverty an excuſe for begging and living idly upon the Charity and Induſtry of other men? when they work hard all day to get Bread for themſelves and Families, is this a reaſon to go to the Ale-houſe, and ſpend it all at night, to make themſelves Beaſts, and leave their Wives and Children to ſtarve? ought not God and men to judge them for this?

But above all things, Poverty is the moſt unreaſonable and ſenſeleſs Excuſe for Irreligion, for neglecting the Worſhip of God; For certainly, if any thing will make us ſenſible, how much we ſtand in need of God, Poverty will: Rich men, whoſe Coffers are full of Treaſure, who have Goods laid up for many Years, are apt to forget God, becauſe they think they have no preſent need of Him; they know how to live without Him: They have no occaſion to beg their daily Bread of Him, who have enough to laſt their lives, and to maintain their Poſterity,

Posterity in Luxury, when they are gone: But methinks Poor men, who have no Provisions before-hand, and know not where they shall have their Bread the next day, should be very sensible that they live upon Providence, that they have nothing else to trust to; and would not any one reasonably expect, that such men would be very devout Worshippers of GOD, would pray constantly and heartily to him, to take them into his Care, when they have nothing but the Providence of God to depend on? One would think such men should above all things take care to please God, and to make him their Friend and Patron; for if he cast them off, they have no other Refuge: that is a prophane irreligious mind indeed, whom Want and Distress will not drive to GOD.

But, what would you have such Poor men do? They han't time to spare for their Prayers, unless they should spare it from eating or sleeping; they must be up early at work, and have not leisure for their Devotions, as those have who live at ease.

But did they believe the Divine Providence, it would satisfy them that the time of Prayer is the best spent of any time in the day, and contributes more to make a comfortable Provision for them than their hardest Labour; for the Blessing of God is more than our Diligence and Labour; he can succeed and prosper our Work; he can raise up unexpected Friends to us, and by some unseen Accident can change the whole Scene of our Lives, for a more easy and prosperous Fortune.

How-

However, want of time for Prayer and Devotion is always a pretence, and nothing but a pretence to excuse the Indevotion of our Minds; a man who loves and reverences God, never wants time for Prayer, whatever his state of Life be; a Poor labouring man can't every Day spend an Hour at Church at his Prayers, but if he have a Mind prepared and disposed for it, he can fall upon his Knees, and offer up a short Prayer to God, as soon as he rises, which takes up very little time; and tho he cannot be long upon his Knees, yet he can raise up his Heart to Heaven in short and pious Ejaculations; no business can hinder a devout Mind from this, and therefore no business can excuse the not doing it; and this will be accepted by God, when we have no time for more Solemn Prayer.

So that you see Religion is the Business, and ought to be the Care of Poor men as well as of the Rich: there are Graces and Virtues for them to exercise, proper for their state of Life, and therefore they shall be judged as well as the Rich, and ought frequently to think of a Future Judgment, and to live under the constant awe and sense of it.

The constant Sense of a Future Judgment is very necessary for all Mankind, to govern their Lives, and to prepare their Accounts; but besides this, it is of the greatest use to poor men of any other; for it will in a great measure help to cure their Poverty, or to make it easy.

In ordinary cases, a man who lives under a constant Sense of Judgment, cannot be poor to

to extremity; for the Sense of Judgment will make him diligent, and industrious, and honest, and frugal, and temperate, and a devout Worshipper of God, which are all thriving Virtues, and will not suffer a man to be miserably poor: *The diligent hand maketh rich*; and when it does not make Rich, it at least prevents Poverty; inflexible Honesty gives a man Reputation in the World, brings him into Business and Employment, and that is a way to thrive; Frugality and Temperance save what is got, and encrease the Store; and Reverence and Devotion for God brings down Blessings on them, gives success to their honest Labours; and we know it is the Blessing of God which maketh Rich.

The Experience of the World, as well as the Reason of the Thing, proves this: The miserable Poor are generally the most corrupt and profligate part of Mankind, the very Reproach of Human Nature; and if you make any curious Observations about it, you will generally find, that it is not their Poverty which makes them Wicked, but their Wickedness makes them poor: you shall very rarely see an honest, industrious, sober, pious man, but makes a very good shift to live comfortably in the World, unless the Times prove very hard, that there is but little Work, and Provisions dear, or that his Family encreases so quick upon him that he has a great Charge of Children, before any of them are capable of working for their living; and in this case such industrious men seldom want Friends, for every one who knows them, is ready to help them: and therefore poor

Poor Men ought to think of a future Judgment, not only to ſave their Souls, but to teach them to live in the World, to deliver them from the extream preſſures of Want. And this is a double Obligation upon poor Men to think frequently of a future Judgment, that it is neceſſary to provide a comfortable Subſiſtence for them in this World, and to ſave their Souls in the next.

But whether this remove their Poverty or no, it will ſupport them under it, make them patient and contented with their Portion here: if they govern their Lives under the ſenſe of a future Judgment, it will ſupport them under the Meanneſs and Calamities of their preſent Fortune, with better Hopes: They will then contemplate *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s Boſom, and comfort themſelves with the change of their Condition, as ſoon as they remove into the other World; there they ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more; their Wants and Sufferings in this World, if they bear them well, ſhall be greatly rewarded; and tho' they grovel in the Duſt here, and are Worms, and no Men, they ſhall then ſhine forth like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father: It is a miſerable condition indeed to remove from a Dung-Hill to Hell; but a Dung-Hill is a Palace, if it will advance us to Heaven: Nothing but theſe things can make extream Poverty tolerable, but ſuch Hopes as theſe will make the pooreſt Man rich and happy.

3*dly*. None have more reaſon to be put in mind of a Future Judgment than young Men, for

none are more apt to forget it: As *Solomon* intimates in his Counsel to young Men, 11 *Eccl.* 9. *Rejoyce, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: But know, that for all these things* GOD *will bring thee to Judgment.* But to make this Discourse as useful as I can, I shall,

1. Perswade Young Men to possess themselves with a serious and hearty Belief that they shall be judged. 2. Perswade them frequently and seriously to think of a Future Judgment.

1. Let me perswade Young Men to possess their minds with a serious and hearty Belief that they shall be judged: For though they dare not own that they have the least hope of escaping the Judgment of God, more than other Men, yet there is reason to suspect, that they flatter themselves that their Age will excuse their Crimes; that God will take little notice of the Folly and Giddiness of Youth, but will wink at it as he did at the Times of Ignorance.

For though Young Men commonly think themselves the wisest part of Mankind, and despise the Experience and Counsels of Age, yet they are contented to plead their Ignorance and Folly, their Rashness and Giddiness, when they hope to escape Judgment by it. They are but lately come into the World, and every thing is new and surprizing to them; they admire before they understand, and are tempted by

by meer Curioſity to taſte forbidden Pleaſures. Senſe is very ſtrong and vigorous in them, and Reaſon is weak; their Paſſions eager and vehement, and yet ſoft and tender to every Impreſſion; they are led by Examples, and there are more bad than good Examples in the World, and the Examples of the moſt are moſt prevalent, eſpecially when they tempt them to Eaſe, and Softneſs, and Luxury, which are great Temptations to Youth without Examples: And can we think that God won't make great Allowances for ſuch a weak and deceivable State of Humane Nature.

This is the faireſt Plea that can be made for Youth, why God ſhould indulge their Extravagancies, and not exact ſo ſtrict and ſevere an Account from them as from thoſe of riper Years. But if we conſider this over again, we ſhall find as great reaſon, why God ſhould judge Youth, as why he ſhould judge any other Age of Men:

1. For firſt, young Men are accountable for their Actions as well as the Old; they underſtand the Difference between Good and Evil; they know that there is a God, whoſe Creatures they are, and whom they ought to Worſhip and Obey: And this, as I obſerved before, makes Man an accountable Creature, and that makes it fit for God to call him to an account: And if this be a good Argument to prove that Mankind ſhall be judged, it proves that all Men muſt be judged, who are capable of giving an account; and then Young Men muſt be judged as well the old.

Unless we will allow, that Reason and Understanding makes Men liable to be judged, I would desire to know at what Age God must begin to judge Men: No doubt but every Age will find something or other to plead for its exemption from Judgment, as well as Youth, of which more anon. But if Reason makes Men the Subjects of Laws and Government, then we must begin to be obnoxious to Judgment with the beginnings of Reason, and our Account will encrease as our Reason does: that is, as far as our Reason extends, we must give an account; what our Reason and Understanding does not reach, we shall give no account of: This is very just that the degrees of our Knowledge, when it bears proportion to our Age, should lessen or encrease our Account, but it is reasonable too, that Men should give an Account of their Actions proportionable to their Knowledge; and this indeed will make a difference in the Account of Young and Older Men, though it will not wholly excuse Young Men from giving an Account. This may excuse a great many Follies, Indiscretions, and Mistakes of Youth, but it can excuse no known and wilful Sin.

There is a certain Age indeed before Humane Laws will take cognizance of the Actions of Children, as not looking on them as reasonable Agents; they must be governed by the Rod, and kept under Discipline, but have not Understanding enough to govern themselves by Laws; but Humane Laws will judge and punish those who hope to plead their Youth as an Exemption from the Judgment of God:

God: But why ſhould Young Men expect that God will not judge them for thoſe Crimes for which Men will Judge, and Condemn, and Execute them too? This is either unjuſt in Men, or very juſt in God: Before they flatter themſelves that God will excuſe the Lewdneſs, and Extravagancies, and Frenzies of their Youth, let them try whether this Plea will paſs in Human Courts; and not think it unreaſonable that God ſhould judge and puniſh Youth, when the Wiſdom of all Nations has thought it juſt and reaſonable.

2. Conſider farther, whether you can think it fitting, that God ſhould ſuffer Young Men to live as they liſt, without judging them for it? that he ſhould lay the Reins on their Necks, and let them indulge their Luſts and Appetites, and take their fill of ſenſual Pleaſures, and commit all manner of Villanies without reſtraint?

For can it become a Wiſe and Holy God to grant Indulgence to Vice? Are Adulteries, Fornications, Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Prophaneneſs, Irreligion, no Sins, when committed by Young Men? Can any one give a reaſon why theſe Sins ſhall damn a Man of Forty or Fifty, and be indulged in one of Twenty?

Does it become the Wiſe and Holy Governour of the World to contribute ſo much to the debauching Mankind, as to indulge their youthful Luſts? to ſuffer their tender Minds to be corrupted with the love and practice of Vice? To be prepoſſeſſed and prejudiced againſt the Severities of a Holy Life? When Men

by indulging their Lusts are grown fond of this World, and of bodily Pleasures, when are they likely to grow wise? When will they think it time to submit to God's Government, and to obey his Laws? How seldom is it seen, that Men who contract Habits of Wickedness in their Youth, ever get a perfect mastery of them, or prove seriously Religious? and those who do, with what infinite difficulty do they do it?

So that should God give liberty to Men, to be as wicked as they please, while they are young, it would be to little purpose to give Laws to riper Years; the Seeds of Vertue or Vice are sown in tender Minds, and grow up with them, and are very difficultly rooted out: If God intends we should Worship and Obey him, when we are Men, he must lay early Restraints upon us, and fashion our Minds betimes: And that is a reason why he should judge Youth, and antidote them against the flattering Temptations of this Life, with the Hopes and Fears of another World. If you think it hard, that God should judge you for the Lewdness and Extravagancies of Youth, consider whether it would not be much harder, to suffer you to be corrupted when you are young, and to damn you for continuing wicked when you are old: The fears of Judgment may restrain and govern your youthful Passions, and season you with the Principles of an early Piety, which will grow up into confirmed Habits of Vertue, which will direct and govern your Lives in this World, and carry you safe to Heaven; but if Young Men might sin securely

curely without fear of Judgment, in all likelihood they would ſin on, till they were old enough to be damned.

3. I muſt add this alſo; That there is as little reaſon to expect, that Young Men ſhould be excuſed from being judged, and from giving an account of their Actions, as that any other Men whatſoever ſhould be excuſed; every Age has its peculiar Temptations and Difficulties; and if this were a reaſon why they ſhould not be judged, no Men muſt be judged: But Youth, before it is corrupted and grown ungovernable, has the feweſt Temptations, and the greateſt Reſtraints and Preſervatives of any Age, and therefore is the leaſt excuſable.

Youth indeed is raſh, and giddy, and inconſiderate; but then it is, or ought to be under the Direction and Government of Parents, Maſters, and Tutors: it is a great Misfortune to them when they are not, and a great and fatal Miſcarriage in Parents and Maſters when they neglect the prudent Government of them: But this is the Proviſion God has made for their Government, and therefore has implanted in them a natural Awe and Reverence for their Parents and Superiours, which makes their Counſels and Examples ſacred; which is a mighty Advantage above what thoſe Men have, who have no body to Govern them, and have no Government of themſelves.

Their Reaſon indeed is weak, but it is not corrupted as a great many others have corrupted their Reaſon, by Principles of Atheiſm and Irreligion; they have a Natural Senſe of God, and a Natural Awe and Reverence for his Ju-

ſtice and Providence, and a Natural Belief of another World, eſpecially if any care has been taken to inſtruct them in the Principles of Chriſtianity: And this gives them a great Dread and Horror of Sin, which they believe will bring the Judgments of God upon them in this World, and in the next.

They have little Experience of the World, and a great Curioſity to taſte the Pleaſures of it; but they are not yet acquainted with the ſinful Pleaſures of it; they have not contracted a fondneſs for them; and the Fear of God will more eaſily check and reſtrain a Curioſity, than conquer a Habit; and therefore they have a more eaſie Task to keep themſelves innocent, than old Sinners have to conquer their vicious Habits, who muſt *pluck out a right Eye, and cut off a right Hand to enter into Heaven.*

And the Natural Modeſty of Youth is a mighty Reſtraint which makes them bluſh at the Thoughts of any Wickedneſs, and ſo afraid of a Diſcovery, when they think of committing it, that it deprives them of the Opportunities of committing it: and while Men retain their natural Modeſty, a thouſand Thoughts give check to them, and a thouſand Accidents diſappoint them: But when they have ſinned away their Reputation, and their Shame with it, when they are hardned againſt Reproach and Infamy, or have loſt all ſenſe of the difference between Good and Evil, they have nothing to ſtop them till they come to Hell.

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This is the Original State of Youth, which was made for Piety and Vertue, and all Men muſt acknowledge, that they are in a much nearer diſpoſition for it, than old Sinners: There is almoſt as much difficulty at firſt to debauch an innocent mind, as there is to reclaim an old Sinner; to make the one conquer Shame, as there is to make the other bluſh: And why then ſhould we think, that Young Men ſhall not be judged by God for breaking through all theſe Reſtraints? When it is as hard a thing for them to be bad, as it is for others to be good, why ſhould they hope to eſcape in thoſe Sins for which others ſhall be judged and condemned?

This is ſufficient to convince Young Men, that God will judge them as well as others: As young as they are, they know when they do their Duty, and when they tranſgreſs it, and therefore may be called to an account for it. It never becomes a Holy God, nor the Wiſe Governour of the World to indulge Men in Sin, and as little to indulge Young Men as any others; for if he ſhould indulge them in contracting vicious Habits when they are young, he has leſs reaſon to judge and condemn them for it, when they are old: And indeed Young Men have leaſt reaſon to expect ſuch an Indulgence; for whatever their Temptations are, it is much eaſier for them to keep themſelves innocent, than it is for other Men to conquer the Habits of Vice.

2. Let me now perſwade Young Men frequently to think of a Future Judgment: There is

is great reason for this Exhortation, because they are very apt to forget it, and yet they have very great occasion for it.

1. They are very apt to forget it: Their Spirits are gay and brisk, and they meet with such variety of entertainments, as will not admit of such melancholy Thoughts as a Future Judgment: They are so lately come into the World, and are big, it may be, with such great designs of advancing their Fortunes in it, that they cannot think of going out of it very quickly again: They look upon Judgment as they do upon the other World, as a great way off, and therefore it is not of a present concernment, but may be thought of time enough some Years hence: These are all very foolish Reasonings; but yet these, or such like Fallacies serve to impose upon Young Men; or whatever their Pretence be, Experience tells us, that it is true in Fact, that they think very little of a Judgment to come.

It is easie enough to shew, that these are no Reasons why they should not think frequently of a Future Judgment: How gay and pleasant soever they be, and whatever their Designs are for this World; the thoughts of Judgment will not allay nor interrupt their Pleasures, while they preserve their Innocence: Nothing can make the thoughts of Judgment uneasie to them, unless they resolve to take such Liberties, and pursue such Designs as they are afraid to be called to an account for; and the reason why they should think of Judgment, is to prevent this; for if once they distract their Minds with Guilt, the thoughts of Judgment will ever after be

be very uneaſie to them, and they muſt never think of it, if they can help it. The beſt way is to accuſtom our minds to the thoughts of Judgment while we are innocent, before we begin to be afraid to think of Judgment, and that will preſerve our Innocence, and then the thoughts of Judgment will never interrupt our Pleaſures.

But if we caſt off the thoughts of Judgment in Youth, which is the ſureſt Guard and Preſervative we have, we ſhall by degrees caſt off the belief of it too: When we lay aſide the thoughts of Judgment, to take the greater Liberties, *to walk in the ways of our hearts, and in the ſight of our eyes*, we contract ſuch Guilt as makes us afraid of Judgment, and very willing to believe that we ſhall never be judged; and then we may eaſily find ſome little Argument or other to perſwade us that there is no Judgment; that either there is no God, or that he takes no notice of Humane Actions.

The thoughts of Judgment are never uneaſie and troubleſome, till Men have ſcared and terrified their Conſciences with Guilt; and therefore the certain way never to have the thoughts of Judgment troubleſome, is to begin betimes to make it familiar to us; and if we do ſo, the thoughts of it will not prove melancholy, and then we ſhall have no reaſon to lay them aſide.

And it is a great miſtake to imagine, that there is no need to think of Judgment but when it is near; that we may ſecurely lay aſide the thoughts of it, when it is at a diſtance; for neither its being near, nor its being at a diſtance

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is any reason either to think or not to think of Judgment; but the true reason is, to govern our Lives under the sense of a Future Account, and that is a good reason, equally good, whether Judgment be nigh at hand or a great way off: For if we must give an account of what we do at seventeen or twenty Years old, and of what we do at fifty or sixty, there is the same reason to think of Judgment, and to govern our Lives under the sense of it when we are but twenty, as when we are threescore Years old.

2. Young Men have great and constant occasion for the thoughts of Judgment; and that is a good reason why they should think frequently and seriously of it.

What but this can reduce that giddy Age within bounds, and make them live by Rule? But if they would consider, that they must be judged by Rule, by the Laws of the Everlasting Gospel, this would do it: This would convince them that they are not their own Masters, that they are not at liberty to live as they list, and to pursue every wild and roving Fancy; they may indeed do this, if they please, but they shall be judged for it, if they do.

What but this can cool the Heats of Youth, and conquer all the Charms of Flesh and Sense? *But know*, saith the Wise Man, *that for all these things God will call thee to Judgment.* And a Man who is afraid of Judgment, who is afraid of Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, who has the terrible prospect of eternal Miseries before him, will have no great Appetite to the choicest Sensualities: He will freeze in the Embraces of the most

moſt beloved Miſtreſs, and will tremble in the midſt of his Cups, as *Belſhazzar* did, when he ſaw the Hand-writing upon the Wall: For who can bear the thoughts of being miſerable for ever? Who, with theſe thoughts about him, can reliſh ſuch fatal Pleaſures? Pleaſures which will coſt him his Soul? Short and dying and vaniſhing Pleaſures, which will end in eternal Pain? Who would not be contented to endure the pain of denying an Appetite, of ſubduing a domineering Paſſion, of plucking out a right Eye, and cutting off a right Hand, rather than to be miſerable for ever? And when it is ſo impoſſible for Young Men to reſiſt theſe flattering Temptations, without a preſent and awful ſenſe of Judgment, can any thing more concern them than frequently to repeat theſe Thoughts, and to poſſeſs their Imaginations with the laſting Impreſſions and Images of it, that it may be always at hand, and ready for uſe?

But this is neceſſary for all Men, as well as thoſe who are young; whoever takes care of his Soul, ought to keep his Eye upon a future Judgment; I grant it is ſo, but there are ſome peculiar Advantages, which Young Men will reap by this, if they begin this Practiſe betimes:

1ſt. For this will preſerve their Innocence and Vertue, and prevent the Terrors and Agonies of a late Repentance: All the Kindneſs the Thoughts of Judgment can do to Old Sinners, is to put a ſtop to them, and to bring them to Repentance: And this is a very great kind-

kindness, if it makes them true Penitents, because it will save their Souls. And this is that which most Sinners desire, to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin as long as they can, and to repent before they die: And thus they think they adjust all Interests, gratifie the Flesh, and save their Souls at last.

But if these Men ever prove true Penitents, they become very sensible of their Mistake: They wish then when it is too late, that they had *remembred their Creator in the days of their youth*; that they had preserved themselves from the Pollutions of Flesh and Sense; they feel by sad Experience, *what an evil and a bitter thing it is to sin against God:* How amazing the shame, how sharp the sorrow of Repentance is: It is a very melancholy and disconsolate Work, when Men draw near their end, to look back upon a vitious and profligate Life, to have their whole Lives to unlive again; to abhor themselves for what they have done, and to look forward with trembling into the other World: For such late Penitents generally carry the marks of their Repentance in shame and sorrow to the Grave with them.

All this Young Men may prevent, if they will but think of Judgment in their Youth, and govern their Lives under a sense of it: This will make them *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*, and consecrate their tender Age to his Service: It will preserve them from Youthful Lusts, from all enormous Crimes, and give them the humble Assurance and Confidence of dutiful Children in their Addresses to God: When they draw near a conclusion of their

their lives, they review their paſt Victories over the World and the Fleſh with the ſecureſt Triumphs: The little Follies, and Indiſcretions, and Miſcarriages which the beſt Men are ſubject to, will keep them humble, and teach them to truſt only in the Merits and Interceſſion of Chriſt; but when they have made it the whole buſineſs of their Lives to pleaſe God, tho' with the common Weakneſſes and Infirmites of Humane Nature, they feel great Peace of Mind, and aſſurance of the Love of God; and the nearer their Work is to an end, the more ſecurely they triumph.

What a happy ſtate ſhall we think this, when Death and Judgment are in view! to feel ſo ſweet a Calm in our Breaſts! to have ſo joyful a Proſpect before us! And who would not think of Judgment when he is young, that the hope and expectation of it may be the Comfort and Support of Age; that then he may review his paſt Life, not to undo what he has done, but to taſte the Pleaſures, and to reap the Rewards of it in preſent Peace of Mind, and great Hopes.

2*dly*. There is another Advantage which Young Men may make of the early thoughts of Judgment, which old Sinners have loſt, and can never retrieve by all their Repentance, *viz*. To make great Advances and Attainments in Piety and Vertue, which will greatly augment their Reward. Men who ſin on till Old Age, though they prove true Penitents at laſt, can never recover this; for their time is paſt, and their youthful Strength and Vigour ſpent, and the Scene of Action over; they can never recall

call thirty or forty Years paſt, in which if they had improv'd their time well, they might have done great Service to God and to Religion, and great Good to Men; but thoſe who are beginning their Lives, if they ſtart right at firſt, and purſue an even and ſteady Courſe of Piety and Vertue; if they keep the future Judgment, and the next World always in their Eye, what Improvements will they make! what rich Treaſures and glorious Rewards may they expect from that Righteous Judge, *who will render to every Man according to his Works!*

The moſt that a Penitent can expect after a long Life ſpent in Wickedneſs and Folly, is to get to Heaven, and it is infinite Mercy in God to accept of ſuch Penitents; but the bright and dazling Crowns are reſerv'd for thoſe who have ſpent their Lives well, and glorify'd God on Earth, and finiſh'd the Work he gave them to do: Such Men will triumph at the Concluſion of their Race and Warfare, as St. *Paul* did, *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.*

I know this will not affect thoſe Men now who love their Sins, and deſire to keep them as long as they can; they will be very well ſatisfied if they can but get to Heaven at laſt, how mean ſoever their Station be there; for they are not ſo deſirous to go to Heaven, as to eſcape Hell; and if they can but keep out of Hell, it is all they hope for: But Men muſt have a greater Spirit, a more Divine and Generous Temper of Soul, before they can get to Heaven: If ever they prove true Penitents, the

the loſs of ſo many opportunities of doing Good, and the loſs of any degrees of Glory they might have had, will both ſhame and afflict them. I am ſure the greater Rewards we expect in the other world, the greater degrees of Glory and Happineſs, the greater will our Joy and Triumph be.

Are not Men in this World as fond of Happineſs, as they are afraid of Miſery? Does not a great Mind deſpiſe little Things, and aim at what is great? And is there not as much reaſon to aim at the higheſt Happineſs we are capable of in the next World, as well as in this?

This is the noble Prize I would propoſe to Young Men: You are now beginning your Race, your Day is but in its Dawn; if you riſe with the Sun, and work hard all day, and ſpend your whole Lives in God's Service, what a great deal of work will you do, and what a proportionably great Reward will you have? This you will do, if you make the Thoughts of Judgment familiar to you; this will keep a conſtant Guard upon your Actions, this will excite and quicken your Induſtry, this will make you *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of our Lord, as knowing, that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

CHAP. VI.

For what we shall be Judged.

VI. LET us now enquire, What we are to be judged for: And the general Answer to this is very plain, *That we must all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad,* 2 Cor. 5. 10. That is, we shall be judged for all the Good and Evil we have done.

This is obvious to all Men, and acknowledged by all, who believe a Judgment; and it may be thought impertinent to prove, that we shall be judged for such or such particular Crimes, when it is universally confessed, that we shall be judged for all.

But as I observed under the former Head, though all Men who believe a Future Judgment, profess also to believe that all Men shall be judged; yet some Men are very apt to forget it, and to flatter themselves, that they shall escape better than others; so is it here: Though Men will in general acknowledge, that we must give an account of whatever we have done in the Body, yet there are a great many things, which in themselves are very great Crimes, and yet many Men think there is no account to be given of them. I shall not instance in particular Sins, though a great many such there are, which few Men take any great notice of; but shall confine my self to what is

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of a more general Nature, for Particulars would be endleſs.

I. Firſt then we muſt remember, that we ſhall be judged for our Ignorance: which ſome Men are ſo far from ſuſpecting, that they take Sanctuary in their Ignorance to skreen them from the Judgment of GOD. If they can but keep out the Light, they think they are ſafe; to ſtumble and fall in the Dark is a Misfortune, not a Fault, and will rather move Pity and Compaſſion, than provoke Revenge: This makes ſome Men ſo regardleſs of Knowledge; they think God will judge them for no more than they know; and all the good they are like to get by Knowledge, is to encreaſe and aggravate their Account.

I ſhall not enter into that Diſpute now, (which is nothing to our preſent Purpoſe) How far, and in what Caſes Ignorance will excuſe; though I think it is very plain in general, that as far as Ignorance it ſelf is excuſable, ſo far Ignorance will excuſe: But my buſineſs at preſent is to ſhew, That commonly Ignorance it ſelf is a great Crime, and when it is ſo, if men ſhall not be judged for the ſins which they ignorantly commit, yet they ſhall be judged and condemned for their Ignorance, as well as for their Sins againſt Knowledge.

For is not Man a reaſonable Creature? And is not a reaſonable Creature as much bound to know his Duty, as he is to practiſe it? Has God given us Reaſon to be the Guide and Director of our Lives, and is it not a great Crime not to attend to it, not to improve and cultivate it? Have we Eyes in our Heads, and is it

any Excuſe to us, that we ſhut them, and loſe our way? Is it any Excuſe to us not to know God, and our Duty to him, when God has made us reaſonable Creatures, who may know their Maker if they pleaſe, and underſtand the difference between Good and Evil? I am ſure St. *Paul* by this Argument proves, that the Heathens were inexcuſable, becauſe God had implanted ſuch Natural Notions of himſelf on their Minds, and had given them ſo many external and viſible Demonſtrations of his Power and Providence in Making and Governing the World, 1 Rom. 19, 20. *Becauſe that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them. For the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe.* The Heathens did greatly err both in the Knowledge and Worſhip of God; they were convinced by the Natural Senſe of their Minds, and by the Works of Creation, that there is a God; and therefore they are ſaid *to know God,* 21. v. And by the ſame way they might have known that God who made the World, *is not like to Gold and Silver, or the Works of mens hands,* to Images made like *to corruptible Man, or to Birds and four-footed Beaſts, and creeping Things*; and therefore though they were really ignorant of the Nature of God, and had entertained very groſs Imaginations of the Deity, yet they were without Excuſe, becauſe God is to be known by Reaſon and Nature; and therefore a reaſonable Creature, who lives in a World which has

has the visible Marks of infinite Wisdom and Power on it, can never be excused for not knowing God: that is to say, nothing will excuse our Ignorance of that which we may know, and which we ought to know.

But if the Heathens were so inexcusable for their Ignorance of God, who had no other Helps but the Light of Nature, and the visible Works of God; to be sure Ignorance must be a great Crime in those who live where the Gospel is preached; and may read the Word of God themselves, if they please, and learn their Duty from it: God knows a great many very ignorant People there are among us, who know little more of God than the Heathens did, who sit in Darkness, and in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, in the very Regions of Light, *when the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the ways of peace.*

Will it not be an impudent thing for such Men to plead Ignorance at the Day of Judgment, who would not look into the Bible, nor attend publick Instructions, to learn their Duty? Who had the Means and Opportunities of Knowledge, but would not use them; who took a great deal of pains to be Ignorant, and to keep out of the way of Knowledge, which so often crossed them, that they had much ado to escape it? Whatever may be pleaded in excuse of the Ignorance of Heathens, there can be no Excuse for Christians, who have the most perfect Revelation of the Will of God, and will not look into it: This is

a great Contempt of God; it is in effect to ſay to God, *Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways*, 21. Job 14. And it is hard to ſay, which is the moſt provoking Sin, to deſpiſe the Knowledge of God, or to break his Laws: Not to think it worth our while to know the Will of God, or through the power of Temptation to tranſgreſs our Duty.

And this is the Danger we are in, if we neglect or reject the Knowledge of the Goſpel; our Ignorance will be our greateſt Crime; it will be ſo far from excuſing our Wickedneſs, that it will aggravate it, for we chuſe to be ignorant, that we may be wicked: And therefore it concerns us diligently to read and ſtudy the Scriptures, and to attend upon the Publick Miniſtry of the Word, and the Private Inſtructions and Directions of our Spiritual Guides; for ſince Chriſt came from Heaven to declare the Will of God, and has put the Holy Scriptures into our Hands, which are a perfect Rule of Faith and Manners, and furniſhed us with all the Advantages to encreaſe in Knowledge; it is as dangerous a thing to be wilfully ignorant of the Goſpel, as it is to diſobey it.

II. As Men ſhall be judged for their Ignorance, ſo they ſhall be judged for their Infidelity: This is ſo plain in Scripture, that it needs little Proof; our Saviour expreſly tells us, *He that believeth on him* (that is, *on the Son of God, whom God ſent into the World, that the World through him might be ſaved*) *is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only be-*

begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the World, and Men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil, 3. John 17, 18, 19. This our Saviour frequently inculcates on the *Jews*, that unleſs they believe on him, they muſt die and periſh in their Sins. And we know the *Jews* were rejected by God for their Infidelity; their Temple, and City, and Nation deſtroyed by the *Romans*, and they diſperſed and ſcattered among all Nations to this day. And our Saviour after his Reſurrection, when he gave Commiſſion to his Apoſtles to go into all the World, and to preach the Goſpel to every Creature, univerſally pronounces, *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, 16. Mark 16. And therefore St. *Peter* tells the *Jews*, *Neither is there Salvation in any other: For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved*, 4. Acts 12. And if there be no other Name whereby Men muſt be ſaved, Infidelity muſt damn us.

Would ſome Men in our days ſeriouſly conſider this, they would not think themſelves ſo ſecure in their Infidelity, nor take ſo much pains to make themſelves Infidels: For if after all their pains to disbelieve the Goſpel, it ſhould prove true at laſt, they muſt be damned for diſbelieving it.

If Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, and there is no other Name under Heaven whereby Sinners can be ſaved; thoſe who will not believe on his Name muſt eternally periſh: As if there were but one Phyſician in

the World, who could cure ſuch a mortal Diſtemper, thoſe who labour under this Diſtemper, and will not go to this Phyſician for their Cure, muſt neceſſarily die by their neglect; their Infidelity in that caſe would kill them [what reaſons ſoever they could pretend for their Infidelity] by neglecting the only means of their Recovery.

But beſides this, Infidelity is a very great Crime, when we have ſufficient Reaſons and Motives of Faith: For this deſtroys all Commerce and Intercourſe (if I may ſo ſpeak) between GOD and Men: If Men may be allowed to disbelieve a Revelation which has all the Evidence and Proof that any Revelation can have, it makes it impoſſible for God to reveal his Will to the World; at leaſt to give us ſuch a ſtanding Revelation as may be a certain Rule of Faith to all Ages.

And beſides this, Infidelity is not owing to want of Evidence, but to an evil Temper of Mind, which is prepoſſeſſed with ſuch vicious Luſts and Paſſions, as will not ſuffer Men to believe; thus our Saviour tells us, *That men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil:* And tells the Phariſees, *How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and ſeek not that honour which cometh of God?* So that Infidelity is more in Mens Wills than in their Underſtandings, and therefore is as puniſhable as any other Vice: And though ſuch Infidels will pretend to Reaſon for their Infidelity, and deſpiſe and laugh at the eaſie Credulity of the reſt of the World; they may have a great force and byaſs upon their Underſtandings for

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all that, and would they be honeſt and ſincere, they themſelves muſt be ſenſible of it: However, God who ſees their Hearts, ſees that it is ſo; and it is reaſon enough to By-ſtanders to ſuſpect it is ſo, when they obſerve, that the more vertuouſly Men are inclin'd, the more readily they embrace the Goſpel, and the more firmly they believe it; whereas Infidels commonly make little pretence to Sobriety or Vertue, but are Men of this World, who deſign no more than to pleaſe themſelves in the Enjoyment of it; and when Mens underſtandings in other Matters are equally good, it is very reaſonably ſuſpicious, that it is only their different Inclinations and Paſſions, which make them judge ſo differently of things.

If this be the Caſe, as our Saviour aſſures us it is, and as our own Reaſon, and our Obſervation of Mankind, may give us ſufficient cauſe to ſuſpect, all Men muſt grant, that it is as fit Men ſhould be judged for their Infidelity, as for any other Vice: And this is reaſon enough to make Men afraid of Infidelity: For if they may be damned for being Infidels, they have no reaſon to be ſecure in their Infidelity.

Infidels themſelves muſt confeſs, that if there be ſufficient reaſon to believe the Goſpel, they deſerve to be puniſhed for their Unbelief: And if it ſhould prove true at laſt, it will be too late to diſpute it in the other World, whether God had given them ſufficient Evidence of it. The great number of Believers, who were as wiſe and cautious Men as themſelves, will convince them, that there was Evidence enough for wiſe thinking Men to believe the Goſpel; And when they ſhall be aſhamed to plead want of

of Evidence for their Unbelief, what Excuse will they find for their Infidelity?

This may convince Infidels themselves, that their Infidelity is no security to them, for whether they will believe Heaven and Hell or not, if there be an Heaven they shall lose it, and if there be an Hell they shall fall into it for their Infidelity; and deservedly too, if their Infidelity be caused by the fault of their Wills, not by a want of Evidence: And therefore no Man can be secure in his Infidelity, till he be secure that his Infidelity is not wilful; that there is no corrupt nor vicious Affection which byasses and perverts his Judgment; and there is but one way of trying this, that I know of, and I am pretty confident it would cure all the Infidelity in the World: Let Men renounce all their sinful Lusts and Vices, which make them infamous to the World; let them obey the Laws of the Gospel, which are for the good of Humane Societies, for the good of their Families, which are the Ornament and Perfection of Humane Nature, whether the Gospel be true or not, and then if they can disbelieve the Gospel, it is not because their deeds are evil, not because they have some Lust or other to serve by their Infidelity, and this would make their Infidelity very excusable; but I know not of such an Infidel as this in the World. It is apparent and visible, that the Infidels of our Days promise themselves security in their Vices from their Infidelity: They laugh at Heaven and Hell, because they will not be at the pains to go to Heaven, and are afraid of Hell: Whatever Wit and Reason

Reaſon they pretend to, all Mankind ſee which way their Inclinations lead them; and if they do not ſee it themſelves, nor ſuſpect that this may be the Cauſe of their Infidelity, whatever Wit they may have, they have no Senſe.

III. We ſhall be judged alſo for not improving thoſe Talents we are entruſted with; that is, for not doing Good in the World: This many Men are apt to forget. To ſquander away, and waſte their Maſter's Goods, to do that which is Evil, this they think they muſt give an account of, but if they do no hurt, they are not much concerned what good they do. But our Saviour in the Parable of the Talents, informs us better, that we muſt give an account of our Improvements: For he who received but one Talent, went and digged in the Earth and hid his Lord's Money, and when his Lord came to reckon with him, he ſaid, *Lord, I knew that thou art an hard Man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy Talent in the Earth: Lo, there thou haſt what is thine. But his Lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou wicked Servant, thou kneweſt that I reap where I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed: Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my Money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury. Take therefore the Talent from him, —— And caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outer darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*, 25. Matth.

Here we plainly ſee, that this Servant was not puniſhed for ſpending his Maſter's Money, for he returned him the Talent which he gave him;

him; *Lo, here thou hast what is thine*; but for not improving it, as his other Servants had done: He was an *unprofitable Servant*, who had brought no advantage to his Master. And thus it is plain Men judge of Servants: He is a very wicked Steward indeed, who embezles his Master's Goods, but he is an unprofitable Servant who makes no Improvements: And thus God will judge of us, as we think it reasonable to judge of our Servants.

And good GOD! when we consider how many Talents we are entrusted with, it should make us tremble to think what little Improvements we make of them: Every thing that is improvable to the Service and Glory of God, is a Talent; and if we do not improve it to God's Glory, and to do good in the World, it is a Talent hid in a Napkin, or buried in the Earth. As to give some short Hints and Intimations of this; for a just Discourse about this Matter would be too long a Digression:

Power must be allowed to be a Talent, and a very improvable Talent; for every degree of Power gives Men great opportunities of doing good: Some Men move in a high Sphere, and can give Laws to those below; their very Examples, their Smiles or Frowns are Laws, and can do more to the Reforming of the World, than the wisest Instructions, the most convincing Arguments, the most pathetical Exhortations of meaner Men.

But though few Men have such a Power as this, yet most Men have some degree of Power; to be sure every Father and Master of a Family has; his Authority reaches his Children

dren and Servants, and were this but wiſely improved, it would ſoon reform the World: But how few are there who improve this Talent? who uſe their Power to make thoſe who are under their Authority obedient to God, which is the true Uſe and Improvement of Power.

Riches, I ſuppoſe, will be allowed to be another very improveable Talent; for what Good may not a Rich Man do, if he have a heart to do it? He may be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame; a Father to the Fatherleſs, and a Husband to the Widow; a Tutelar Angel, and even a God to Men. And Riches are a Truſt and a Stewardſhip, of which we muſt give an Account. To ſpend them upon our Luſts, in Rioting, Luxury, and Wantonneſs, this is to waſte our Maſter's Goods: and to keep them ſafe, without doing any good with them, is to hide them in the Earth, as the unprofitable Servant did his Talent: and if we muſt be judged and condemned for not improving our Talents, for *not putting our Lord's money to the exchangers, that when he comes he may receive his own with uſury*, as our Saviour tells us, rich Men ought to examine their Accounts, and ſee what Encreaſe they have made of their Talent; not how they have multiplied their Gold and Silver, but what good they have done with it.

Once more, Wiſdom and Knowledge, eſpecially the Knowledge of God and of Religion, is a very improveable Talent; for there is nothing whereby we can more advance the Glory of God, or do more good to Men: To inſtruct

ſtruct the Ignorant, to confirm the Doubtful, to vindicate the Being and Providence of God, to ſhame and baffle Atheiſm and Infidelity, to expound the Doctrines and Laws of our Saviour, and reſcue them from perverſe Gloſſes and Comments; this makes the Glory of God more viſible to the World, and ſerves Mankind in their greateſt and deareſt Intereſts; it feeds their Souls with Knowledge and Underſtanding, directs them in the Way to Heaven, and minds them to take care of their Eternal State.

This indeed is the peculiar Care and Charge of the Miniſters of Religion; they are *the Stewards of the Myſteries of* GOD; thoſe whom *our Lord has made Rulers over his Houſhold, to give them Meat in due ſeaſon*, 24 Matth. 25. And St. *Paul* tells us, *It is required of theſe Stewards, that they be found faithful.* But this is a Talent which thoſe may have in great perfection, who are not by Office the Guides of Souls; and where-ever it is, it muſt be improved, and muſt be accounted for: We may many times do more ſervice to God, and more good to Men, by giving wiſe and wholſome Inſtructions, than by giving an Alms: This every Man who knows enough to take care of his own Soul, can do in ſome meaſure; and this he muſt and ought to do, as well as he can: but ſo few Men think of this; or charge themſelves with it as belonging to their Account, that it is fit to mind you of it.

IV. We ſhall be judged not only for our own perſonal Sins, but, in many caſes, for the

the Sins of other Men, which we have made our own: There are a great many ways whereby we may bring the Guilt of other Mens Sins upon our ſelves; when we tempt and provoke Men to ſin, by our Authority, Counſels, Examples; when we perſwade, intice, threaten, or ſhame Men into Sin; when we neglect our Duty to thoſe who are under our Government; do not inſtruct them better, do not forewarn them of the Danger they are in of being miſerable in this World, and in the next; when we do not reſtrain them when we can, nor puniſh them for their Sins; when we are Partners with them in their Wickedneſs, or the Inſtruments of it; when we corrupt and debauch their Underſtandings with the Principles of Atheiſm, Infidelity, or Sceptiſm; whatever Wickedneſs Men are drawn into by theſe means, is chargeable upon our ſelves, and muſt be added to our Account, as in reaſon it ought to be; for if we are the Cauſe of other Mens ſins, we muſt bear the Guilt of them too.

And if this be ſo, what a terrible Account have ſome Men to make, which they never think of; How many have they corrupted by their Examples, or Counſels, or ſome other way? And how will this aggravate their own Condemnation, when they carry a long Train and Retinue of undone Souls to Hell with them? That if Men will not be good themſelves, they ought to take care how they make others wicked: this they get nothing by, but a double Damnation, and they will find it enough to be damned for themſelves.

We

V. We ſhall be judged alſo for our ſecret Sins: Thus *Solomon* tells us, *God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*, 12 Eccl. 14. And St. *Paul* tells us, That *God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Goſpel*, 2 Rom. 16. And therefore *David* prays to God, *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*, 19 Pſal. 12.

There is no reaſon to think it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſince our moſt ſecret Sins are viſible to God: *All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, 4 Heb. 13. And when God knows our moſt ſecret Sins, why ſhould he not judge us for them? Humane Judicatures will puniſh thoſe ſins which are moſt ſecretly committed, when they happen to be diſcovered; for the ſin is never the leſs, nor does it leſs deſerve to be puniſhed, for being ſecret: and therefore though ſuch ſins may eſcape the Judgment of Men by being concealed, they cannot eſcape God's Judgment, who ſees and knows them.

I grant, that to commit ſin openly in the Face of the Sun, argues greater Impudence in ſinning, does more publick Diſhonour to God, and gives greater Scandal to the World; but ſecret ſins put as great a Contempt on God, as open Impieties do; for it is a plain proof, that ſuch Sinners have a greater Reverence for Men, than they have for God; though they profeſs to believe that God is preſent every where, and ſees all they do, yet they ſecurely commit the greateſt Villanies under his Eye, when no body elſe ſees them, which they durſt

durſt not commit in the preſence of the meaneſt Man.

This is a very unaccountable thing, and one would imagine that ſuch Men did not believe that God ſees what they do in ſecret, and yet they do believe it; and we all know it is ſo: It may be there are few Men but are guilty of ſome private Sins at ſome time or other, which nothing could have perſwaded them to have committed publickly; and yet when any Man is tempted by Secreſie and Retirement, though he drives away the Thoughts of God as much as he can, while he is in purſuit of his Luſts and wicked Deſigns, when he comes to himſelf, and has time to think, his Conſcience ſpeaks Terror to him, and puts him in mind, that God ſees him, though Men do not.

But conſider, I beſeech you, if God will judge us for all our moſt ſecret Sins, how little it will avail us to conceal our Sins from Men: We may indeed by this means eſcape preſent Shame and Puniſhment, but eternal Shame, eternal Torment will be our Portion; and are we more afraid of being reproached by Men, than of being reproached by God and by our own Conſciences? Than of being expoſed to Shame in the general Aſſembly of Men and Angels, when God ſhall bring to light all the hidden Works of Darkneſs? Are we more afraid of ſome Puniſhments in our Bodies or Eſtates, which Humane Laws and Judicatures can inflict on us, than we are of Hell, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched?

I am very sensible what it is that deceives Men in this Matter, and if you will but reflect upon your selves, you will find what I say to be true: You do believe that God sees your most secret Sins, and will judge and condemn you for them; and you are more afraid of Hell, than of all present Shame and Punishment; and yet you will venture upon those Sins under the Eye of God, which the Presence of a Man, at least of such Men as will discover your Sin and Shame, and punish you for it, would have kept you from? What is the meaning of this? To be more afraid of God than of Men, and yet to stand in more awe of Man than of God?

The account of this, which looks like a Mystery, I think, is very plain: Men dare not commit those Sins publickly, which they will venture on in private, because if Men see their Wickedness, they immediately forfeit their Reputation, and get such a Blot and Stain on their Names, as all the Tears of Repentance cannot wash out again, for they know the World is ill-natur'd, and every single Miscarriage, which comes to be known, leaves an indelible Character of Infamy on them; and they are not willing to forfeit their Reputation, which is so necessary to the Comforts of Life, for ever: And besides this, if the Sins they commit be such as are punishable by Humane Laws, if they be known, all their Repentance, how sincere soever it be, will not deliver them from Punishment; and though they love their Sins very well, they will not venture the Punishment of them.

But

But now though God abhors all Sin more than the beſt Men do, and Hell be a more terrible Puniſhment than any thing in this World, yet God may be atoned and reconciled by Repentance: Repentance will reſtore them to the Favour of God, and hide and cover their Sins, and blot them out of their Account, and reconcile them to their own Conſciences, and prevent their final Puniſhment in the next World: And this they reſolve upon; repent they will, and Repentance will ſecure them both from the future Shame and Puniſhment of Sin; and therefore their only care is, to conceal their Shame from Men, and to eſcape preſent Puniſhment: And this is the reaſon why they dare commit thoſe Sins in ſecret, though they know God ſees them, which they dare not commit in the view of the World: This makes the Preſence and the Eye of God ſo ineffectual to reſtrain Mens Luſts, that they hope after all rheir ſecret Villanies to be friends again with God, but do not expect, ſhould the World diſcover their Wickedneſs, that it would ſpare them, or ever think well of them more.

This looks like a very notable Contrivance, to preſerve our Reputation in the World by Secreſie, and to regain the Favour of God by Repentance: But the Devil is too cunning for Sinners; for if the Awe and Reverence for God, and the Fear of a Future Judgment will not preſerve Men from ſecret Sins, their other Hopes will deceive them; ſuch Mens Shame will not be long concealed, and their Repentance will ſoon grow impoſſible.

When Men think to out-wit God, his Juſtice and Providence is concerned for their diſcovery: Almoſt as many Sinners as we ſee Hanged, or Pilloried, or Whipt, ſo many Demonſtrations there are, that Men cannot conceal their Sins, or can never be ſure they ſhall: For all theſe Malefactors ſtudy Secreſie and Concealment, as much as they can; and yet are at one time or other diſcovered, and ſuffer that publick Shame and Puniſhment they deſerve. There are a thouſand Accidents which betray the greateſt Privacies, a thouſand Circumſtances which make Men ſuſpected, and that makes them watched, and curiouſly obſerved; they cannot always uſe that Caution that is required, or the Partners and Inſtruments of their Sins are diſcovered, and then they betray one another: Nay, many Sins without great Caution will betray themſelves; let Men be never ſo ſecret in their Luſt, it will be known to all the World when they begin to rot with it, when the Marks of their Sin grow viſible, and can be hid no longer: Nay, Men who ſin very cautiouſly and ſecretly at firſt, in time grow more bold and impudent, and are not ſo much concerned to be private; what at firſt they were aſhamed the World ſhould know, in time they think no Shame. A cuſtom of ſinning, though in private, wears off the Modeſty of Humane Nature; and when Men forget to bluſh, they deſpiſe Reproach and Cenſure, and then publiſh their own Wickedneſs, and ſeek for Retirement and Privacy no longer: The moſt impudent Sinners in the World were at firſt modeſt; but if they find any

any Excuſe to make a beginning, how modeſt ſoever their beginnings are, they quickly improve and loſe the ſenſe of Sin, and averſion to it by their repeated Commiſſions, and then cannot bear the Reſtraints of Modeſty and Retirement.

And this ſhews what little hope there is, that ſecret Sinners ſhould ever prove true Penitents; for the moſt impudent and hardened Sinners ſinned very ſecretly at firſt; and of all thoſe Sinners, who made very modeſt and baſhful beginnings, I doubt for one true Penitent, ſome hundreds ſin away all Thoughts of Repentance.

For the only effectual Reſtraint upon Humane Nature is an Awe and Reverence for God, and the Fear of Future Judgment, and Men may ſin away this in private as well as in publick. When once they conquer a Reverence for God, and for their own Conſciences, which a Cuſtom of Sinning will do, be it never ſo ſecret, they will have little regard to what the World ſays of them; they may fear Humane Puniſhments, but they are ſunk below the ſenſe of Shame.

If ever God reclaim ſuch Men, it muſt be either by ſome great and ſevere Afflictions, which carry the Marks of a Divine Vengeance on them, or by diſcovering their Wickedneſs, and expoſing them to publick Shame before they have loſt all ſenſe of it. But if Men ſin ſecretly, and are very fortunate in concealing their Sins, they will never think it time to repent, till they can ſin no longer.

And therefore since GOD sees our most secret Sins, and will judge us for them; let us maintain a constant Awe for God in our greatest Retirements; let us remember, that God is always present with us, that he sees when no other Eye sees, that he abhorrs our most secret Sins, that it is a great Contempt of God to retain a Reverence for Men, and to cast off the Reverence of God; to be ashamed that Men should know and see that Wickedness which we are not ashamed to commit, though we know God looks on.

But then on the other hand, we must remember, that at the Day of Judgment God will reward all the good we do, how private and secret soever it be; as our Saviour assures us, with reference to our private Devotions, private Alms, and private Fasts: 6. Mat. *That our Father, who seeth in secret will reward us openly.*

It is too often seen that Men make Religion it self minister to their Lusts and secular Interests; as the Pharisees did all their Works, to be seen and to be admir'd of Men; and therefore their great care was for what is external and visible, they prayed in the Corners of the Streets, and gave their Alms with the sound of a Trumpet, and disfigured their Faces, that they might appear unto Men to fast. This was all vain Glory and Hypocrisie; and when they were admired by Men for it, they had the Reward they aimed at, and all the Reward they must expect.

But

But true Religion does not court the Applauſe of Men: A good Man muſt ſet a good Example to the World in his publick Converſation; but ſuch Acts of Vertue as may be private, he is contented ſhould be known to none but God and his own Conſcience.

This is highly acceptable to God, for it is to do good only for God's ſake, and that ſatisfaction we take in doing good: Here is no mixture of ſecular Ends, but God is the whole World to us: that he ſees it, is more than all Humane Applauſe, though the whole World were the Theatre; we expect our Reward from him, and from him only, for we let no body elſe know it; which is ſuch a Perfection of Obedience, of Faith, of Hope and Truſt in God, as deſerves the greateſt Rewards.

Thoſe who induſtriouſly conceal the good they do from Men, can expect nothing from Men for it, neither Praiſe nor Rewards, and therefore can have no other Motive to do good, but the Love and Reverence of God, and Faith in him, or the Pleaſure they take in doing Good for Goodneſs ſake, which are ſuch Noble and Divine Principles of Action, as command Reverence from all Men, when they are diſcovered, do great Honour to the Divine Nature, and will procure great Rewards: Which is a mighty Encouragement to the moſt ſecret Vertues, to the moſt ſecrets Acts of Devotion and Charity, That *our Father who ſeeth in ſecret, will reward us openly in the Preſence of Men and Angels.*

VI. We shall be judged for the Sins of our Thoughts; and though all Men will confess this also, yet few consider it.

Good God! could we look into one anothers Thoughts, how should we blush, and be confounded to see each other! Men, who seem to make Conscience of their external Behaviour and Conversation, make very little Conscience of governing their Thoughts and secret Passions.

Those who appear so modest as to blush at any indecent Word or Action, too often at the very same time burn with Lust, and entertain their Fancies with all impure and unclean Imaginations.

The most affable and courteous Men, whose Words and Behaviour are soft, endearing, and obliging, can yet cherish revengeful Thoughts, Anger, Malice, Hatred, and please themselves with the Imagination of some Tragical Scenes, which they dare not Act.

Nay, many times those who appear humble to a Fault, who seem as free from Ambition as any Men in the World, who arrogate nothing to themselves, nay seem to admire every body but themselves, are yet very full of themselves, swoln with vain Conceits of their own Worth and Merit, and please themselves with their own Deserts, and that the World takes notice of their Deserts; and then they consider, how they ought to be rewarded and preferred, and will be sure to choose very well for themselves; and thus entertain their deluded Fancies with vain and empty Scenes of Greatness and Glory.

The

The Phariſees thought all this very innocent: That to luſt after a beautiful Woman, and pleaſe themſelves with amorous and wanton Imaginations, was no Crime, if they did not commit Adultery; that Anger, and Malice, and Revenge were very innocent, while confined to thought; but our Saviour teaches his Diſciples better, *Ye have heard, it hath been ſaid to them of old, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. But I ſay unto you, Whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. You have heard it hath been ſaid unto them of old, Thou ſhalt not kill: And whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. But I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall be angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment,* 5. Matth. 21, 22, 27, 28.

For indeed the Thoughts and Paſſions of the Soul defile the Man: They diſcover the Temper and Complexion of the Mind: This is *the conceiving of Luſt*, as St. *James* ſpeaks; and while Men indulge themſelves in wanton, luſtful, proud, ambitious, ſpiteful, and revengeful Thoughts, it is almoſt impoſſible but ſuch Thoughts as theſe will influence their Actions, when a favourable Opportunity ſerves; and if they do not, yet we know what the Mens Hearts are; and God who dwells within us, and ſees our Thoughts, will judge the Secrets of Hearts. Men who act over the Scenes of Luſt, and Pride, and Revenge in their Minds, are as unlike to God, who is eſſential Holineſs, Purity, Love, as thoſe who commit all thoſe Villanies, which they only pleaſe themſelves with

with the Fancy of. Our Likeneſs to God conſiſts only in the Conformity of our Wills and Affections to him; for it is only a Spirit that can be like a Spirit; and therefore while our Thoughts and Paſſions are ſo contrary and oppoſite to the Divine Nature, God can never own us, we are not his Children, we are not yet born of God, for we have nothing of his Image on us.

And therefore let us take care of our Thoughts, of our Paſſions and ſecret Affections, for we muſt be judged for theſe, as well as for our external Actions; we may ſin with our Minds and Spirits, as well as with our Bodies; and God who is a Spirit, requires the Worſhip and Obedience of our Minds and Spirits, and is as much offended with ſinful and impure Thoughts, as with wicked Actions.

VII. We ſhall be judged f r our Words too: Thus our Saviou raſſures us, 1 2. Matth. 36, 37. *But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* I need not tell you what theſe *idle words* are; Prophane Atheiſtical Diſcourſe, Blaſpheming God and his Providence, Ridiculing his Worſhip and Religion, the Doctrines and Precepts of it, and thoſe Miracles which were wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, for the Confirmation of Chriſtianity, to which our Saviour particularly refers in this place; or obſcene and wanton Diſcourſe, which St. *Paul* calls *corrupt Communication*, which ſhould never come

come into the Mouths of Chriſtians, and all reviling and reproachful Speeches, Slandering, Back-biting, Railing, which our Saviour threatens with Eternal Damnation: *But I ſay unto you, Whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment: And whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Racha, ſhall be in danger of the council: But whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou Fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire,* 5. Mat. 22. And St. *James* with a peculiar reſpect to ſuch angry reproachful Language, tells us, *If any man among you ſeemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain,* 1. James 26. And yet I need not tell any Man, how common this practice is.

Atheiſtical, Prophane, Obſcene, Reviling Diſcourſes, make up the Wit, and Humour, and Converſation of the Age: The brisk and pleaſant Talkers would ſit like Mopes, and gaze upon one another without one wiſe word to ſay, unleſs you allow them to laugh at God, and Religion, and all things ſacred, to make a Mock of Sin, to tickle their Fancies with obſcene Jeſts, or ſpiteful Reflections; for were it ever poſſible that ſuch Men ſhould have nothing to laugh at, or nothing to rail at, they were undone.

Theſe Men never think of being judged for their Words; and yet there is as much reaſon we ſhould be judged for our Words as for our Actions.

Words are the firſt and moſt natural Indications of the Temper and Diſpoſition of the Mind; For *out of the fulneſs of the heart the mouth*

mouth speaketh: Our Words betray the Atheism and Infidelity, the Lust and Wantonness, Revenge and Malice, and other evil Passions, which are within: Men are generally more cautious of their Actions than of their Words, and they can speak their Minds, when they cannot act; and therefore may be better known by their Words than by their Actions: Nay, Words do not only betray what is within, but shew what the Heart most abounds with: For out of *the fulness* of the Heart the Mouth speaketh: That Men talk of most, which is most in their Thoughts, and which they are most full of; so full, that they cannot open their Mouths, but it runs out.

There are some Fools that only say in their Hearts, *There is no GOD.* Such Thoughts as these lie low and secret, are not come to maturity and perfection yet to be talked; but when Men venture to say this with their Mouths, when they come to be talking and disputing Fools, it is a sign they are very full of these Thoughts, and either are Atheists, or have a great mind to be so.

There are a great many lascivious Wantons, who yet are very modest in Conversation, and will not offend chast Ears with their wanton Discourse; but when Men think they can't be witty nor pleasant Company, without larding their Talk with obscene Jests, and putting modest Matrons and Virgins to the Blush, they have arrived at a great perfection of Lewdness: And do not such Men deserve to be judged?

But

But beſides this, does any thing do more Miſchief in the World, than Words, as little as ſome Men make of them? Can there be a greater Contempt of God, than for Men to deny his Being, to reproach his Providence, to ridicule his Worſhip? St. *Jude* tells us, That *the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him*, Jude 14, 15. *v.*

Does any thing more tend to corrupt the Minds of Men than ſuch Words, which St. *Paul* ſays, *Eat like a canker*, 2 Tim. 2. 17. and prey upon the very Vitals of Religion?

What tends more to corrupt Mens Lives than lewd and wanton Talk, as St. *Paul* tells us, *That evil communication corrupts good manners?*

What makes more Diviſions in the World, and gives greater Diſturbance to Neighbourhoods and Families, and private Perſons, than Slandering, and Backbiting, and Tale-bearing? I am ſure St. *James* tells us, That *the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature; and it is ſet on fire of hell*, 3. Jam. 5, 6. And if words can do ſo much Miſchief in the World, it is very fit that GOD ſhould judge us for them; and then it is very fit that we ſhould be very careful of our words.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the Righteouſneſs of the Future Judgment, and the Rule whereby we ſhall be Judged.

ST. *Paul* tells us, That *God will judge the world in Righteouſneſs*, which had been a terrible Saying, did *Righteouſneſs* always ſignifie ſtrict and ſevere Juſtice? For who then could be ſaved? But δικαιοσυνη ſignifies Mercy, Goodneſs, Equity, as well as Juſtice; or Juſtice tempered with Equity and Mercy: And what the Apoſtle adds, that God will judge the World in Righteouſneſs *by that Man whom he hath ordained*; that is, by Chriſt Jeſus, proves that *Righteouſneſs* ſignifies an equal, kind, and merciful Juſtice: For Chriſt is a Mediatory King, and a Mediatory Judge; he judges between God and Man; He ſets Bounds and Meaſures to Juſtice, and makes Allowances for the Folly and Weakneſſes of Humane Nature; and with a Sovereign Authority diſpenſes not only the Juſtice, but the Mercies of God.

When God appoints the Great High-Prieſt and Mediator to be Judge of the World, all Mankind may expect a very merciful Judge; for the High-Prieſt and Mediator muſt judge with Equity and Mercy, or elſe he does not maintain his Character of Mediator, when he judges; and yet the final Judgment is the concluding

cluding Act of his Mediatory Kingdom, and therefore an Act of his Mediation.

We know not certainly how God will deal with the Heathen World, who never heard of Chriſt, and never had the Goſpel preached to them; but it ſeems to look very favourably on them, that the Saviour of Mankind, the merciful and compaſſionate Jeſus, is their Judge alſo; which promiſes all the Mercy that their Condition is capable of; and how much that is, we cannot tell; for the Saviour of the World muſt judge with Mercy and Equity, not by the Rules of ſevere and rigorous Juſtice: Of which more preſently.

Leaving then the Heathen World to the Mercies of God, which are over all his Works, it more concerns us to enquire by what Rule Chriſt will judge us, who have had the Goſpel preached to us.

Now in general St. *Paul* tells us, *God will judge the ſecrets of men by Chriſt Jeſus according to my Goſpel*, 2. Rom. 16. That is, by the Goſpel which I preach: The Goſpel of our Saviour is the Rule whereby we ſhall be judged; by which our Lives and Actions ſhall be examined; and as the Goſpel acquits or condemns any Man, ſo he ſhall be acquitted or condemned at the laſt Judgment. So that we need not go far to know what our Doom ſhall be, we need not ſearch into the ſecret and hidden Counſels of God; the Goſpel lies open before us, and though we cannot find our Names there, we may read our Sentence; for *God will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek*

ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath: tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentiles, for there is no reſpect of perſons with God, 2. Rom. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. What this good, and this evil is, the Goſpel acquaints us; and if we do what the Goſpel commands, we ſhall be acquitted and rewarded; if we do what it forbids, we ſhall be condemned. So that we certainly know, that all wicked Men, who live in the wilful Commiſſion of any known Sin, ſhall be finally condemned: Chriſt will at that Day *profeſs unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity,* 7. Mat. 23. *Know ye not, that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind; nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *But the Righteous ſhall ſhine forth like the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.* And who theſe Righteous are St. *John* tells us, *Little Children, let no man deceive you, he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that committeth ſin is of the devil, for the devil ſinneth from the beginning; for this purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit*

ſin,

ſin; for his Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God, in this the Children of God are manifeſted, and the Children of the Devil: Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother. 1 Joh. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10.

This is very plain, and ſo expreſly taught in Scripture, that every Man may as certainly know whether he ſhall be ſaved, or damned, at the laſt Day, as he can know whether he be a Good or a Bad Man; whether he doth Righteouſneſs, or commits Iniquity.

But moſt Men are conſcious to themſelves of ſo much wickedneſs, that they don't love to hear of this; for what will become of them, if they muſt be rewarded or puniſhed according to their Works? What difference is there between the Law and the Goſpel, if they muſt ſtill be judged according to their Works? For what could the Law do more than condemn the wicked, and reward the good? But they are Sound and Orthodox Believers; they believe in God, who *juſtifieth the ungodly*; they believe in Chriſt, and truſt in him for Salvation; and *there is no condemnation to thoſe who are in Chriſt Jeſus*: they expect to *be juſtified by* 8 Rom. 1. *Faith*, to *be ſaved by Grace*, and that *without the Works of the Law*; And what has the Law then to do to condemn them, who believe in Chriſt, who have ſatisfied the Law in Chriſt, who have fulfilled the Law in him, who are waſhed from their ſins in his Blood, and are cloathed with his Righteouſneſs imputed to them? Thoſe who are not in Chriſt muſt indeed be judged by their Works, but all true Believers

are justified by their Faith, and saved by Grace.

Now it must be confessed, this is very expressly taught in Scripture, that we are justified by Faith, and saved by Grace, and that without the Works of the Law: *By the Deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. —— But now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifest, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the Righteousness of God which*
3 Rom. 20, *is by faith in Jesus Christ — — Being justified freely*
21, 22, 24, *by his Grace, through the Redemption which is in*
25. *Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his*
4 Rom. *Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God.* That *Abraham* our Father was not justified by Works, but by Faith: That *being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
5 Rom. 1. *By Grace you are saved; through Faith, and that*
2 Eph. 8, 9. *not of your selves, it is the gift of God; not of Works, lest any Man should boast. Not by Works of*
3 Tit. 5. *Righteousness which we have done, but by Grace hath he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

But then it is as plain on the other hand, that God *will render to every Man according to his*
2 Rom. 6. *deeds: that we must all appear before the Judgment-*
2 Co. 5. 10. *seat of Christ, to receive the Things done in the Body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad.* That Christ will condemn all wicked Christians, whatever their Faith be: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

Many

Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works: And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 7 Mat. 21, 22, 23.

What ſhall we ſay then to this matter? both theſe Propoſitions muſt be allowed to be undoubtedly true: We are *juſtified by Faith*, we are *ſaved by Grace*, without the *Works of the Law*; and we ſhall *be judged according to our works, and ſhall receive what we have done in this body, whether good or evil.* That is, we are *juſtified by Faith, juſtified freely by Grace, through the Redemption which is in Chriſt Jeſus, and through Faith in his Blood*, and yet ſhall be condemned at the laſt Judgment, if we live wickedly. This is a matter of very great conſequence to be plainly ſtated, becauſe a great many Chriſtians encourage themſelves in ſin with vain hopes, and eternally periſh by a preſumptuous Faith and Reliance on Chriſt.

I. Now in the firſt place, that whatever miſtakes, or miſapprehenſions Men may have about the Nature of Faith and Juſtification, may not endanger their Souls by encouraging them in Sin, I obſerve, that we muſt reconcile the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith without Works, to our being judged by our Works, not expound away the Doctrine of our being judged according to our Works, to reconcile it to our Notions of Juſtification by Faith. And there are manifeſt Reaſons for this.

1. Becauſe it is as expreſly taught in Scripture, that we ſhall be judged by our Works, as it is, that we are juſtified by Faith, and therefore we muſt not oppoſe our Juſtification by Faith, to our being judged by our Works; for that is not to expound Scripture, but to confute one Scripture Doctrine by another; to prove that we ſhall not be judged by our Works, though the Scripture ſays we ſhall, becauſe the Scripture alſo teaches, that we are juſtified by Faith without Works: Now if it be allowable to reject any Scripture Doctrine, or to confute one Doctrine by another, we may with as good reaſon confute them both by each other, and believe neither; for if they can't be reconciled, but we muſt deny one, our being judged by our Works does as plainly prove, that we are not juſtified by Faith without Works, as Juſtification by Faith proves, that we ſhall not be judged by our Works: We muſt diſtinguiſh between expounding and reconciling Scripture, and confuting it, and therefore whatever we believe about Juſtification by Faith, we muſt ſtill confeſs, we ſhall be judged by our Works.

For 2. There is great reaſon to expound Juſtification by Faith, by our being judged by Works; becauſe when we are told in Scripture, That God *will render to us according to our Deeds, that every man muſt receive the Things done in his Body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Theſe are plain proper Expreſſions, without any Figure or Metaphor in them, and therefore are capable of no other ſence, than what the Words at firſt view ſignifie.

ſie. We ſhall receive what we have done; if we have done good, we ſhall be rewarded; if we have done evil, we ſhall be puniſhed: Good Men ſhall be received into Heaven; and all wicked Men, even wicked Believers, a well as wicked Infidels, ſhall be caſt into Hell: this every Child underſtands to be the meaning of theſe Words, and no other ſence can be made of them; and therefore ſince this is ſo plainly, and ſo frequently taught in Scripture, whatever we believe elſe, we muſt believe this, if we believe the Scripture.

But now when we read of being juſtified by Faith without Works, every Word is capable of very different ſences, and we know is expounded very differently by Learned Men, according to the different Hypotheſis they intend to ſerve by it: And then we muſt confeſs, it is not ſo certain, what is meant by Juſtification by Faith without Works, as what is meant by being judged according to our Works: At leaſt ſo much muſt be allowed, that we muſt preferr that ſence of Juſtification by Faith, which agrees with our being judged by our Works, before any other Interpretation, which contradicts or overthrows this plain ſence of a Future Judgment.

As for inſtance: Some by *juſtifying*, underſtand making juſt and righteous; that *to juſtifie the ungodly*, is to make a wicked Man good by the Power and Efficacy of Faith; but then to juſtifie the ungodly without the Works of the Law, or to make a wicked Man good without good Works, does not ſound very well; and therefore others more reaſon-

ably, and more agreeably to Scripture, underſtand *juſtifying* in a forenſick ſenſe, for abſolving, acquitting, declaring and accounting Men Juſt and Righteous, and treating them as ſuch; that is, *imputing Righteouſneſs* to them, though in a ſtrict and proper ſence they are not inherently righteous: And then this forenſick Juſtification may either ſignifie our being *juſtified* at Baptiſm, when by the profeſſion of our Faith in Chriſt we are incorporated by Baptiſm into Chriſt's Church, and are made the Members of his Myſtical Body, and have all our Sins waſhed away in his Blood, and come pure and innocent out of the Laver of Regeneration; and thus the moſt ungodly Sinners are juſtified by Faith in Baptiſm, without Works, or any antecedent Righteouſneſs of their own; or elſe this juſtification may be extended to the Future Judgment; that at the laſt Day of Account we ſhall be juſtified, acquitted, abſolved, rewarded by Faith without Works; but this does not agree very well with our being judged, and receiving according to our Works: The Scripture expreſly teaches, that we are juſtified by Faith without Works, and that we ſhall be judged by our Works; but never ſaith we ſhall be judged by our Faith; which ſeems to make a great difference between being juſtified, and being judged: For if we are juſtified without Works, and judged by our Works, juſtified by Faith without Works, but not judged, not acquitted and rewarded by Faith without Works, to be juſtified, and to be judged, cannot ſignifie the ſame thing.

Thus

Thus when we are ſaid to be *juſtified by Faith*, ſome by *Faith* underſtand ſuch a firm and ſtedfaſt belief of the whole Goſpel, of all that concerns the Perſon and Mediation of Chriſt, the Expiation of his Blood, his Reſurrection from the Dead, and Interceſſion for us in Heaven, his Laws, his Promiſes, and Threatnings, as renews and ſanctifies our Nature, governs our Lives, conquers the World, ſubdues the Fleſh to the Spirit, and makes us truly Divine and God-like Creatures, the Sons of God, not meerly by external Relation, but by a participation of his Nature.

Now this Notion of *Juſtifying Faith*, that we ſhall be juſtified by a living, working Faith, is very reconcileable with being judged by our Works; for if we cannot be juſtified by Faith without Works, if no Faith can juſtifie, but that which is fruitful in all good Works, then we may be judged by our Works, ſince Holineſs is eſſential to a juſtifying Faith.

Others by a juſtifying Faith underſtand a *Reliance and Recumbency on Chriſt for Salvation*; *a receiving and embracing Chriſt, and rowling their Souls on him*, as they are pleaſed to expreſs it; which, when taken out of Metaphor, can ſignifie no more, than to hope and truſt in Chriſt, that he will ſave them, and to be willing to be ſaved by him without any Works and Righteouſneſs of their own. Now if the bare Act of relying on Chriſt would juſtifie and ſave Men, I cannot ſee how ſuch Believers ſhould be judged by their Works, though Infidels may: But this *Antinomian* Conceit of juſtifying Faith, is not ſo plain and certain, as it is

that we shall be judged by our Works: Not to dispute the Point now, these Men may be mistaken in their Notion of justifying Faith; but there can be no dispute made, what the meaning is of being judged according to our Works.

Thus when we are said to be justified by Faith, in opposition to Justification by Works, it is matter of Controversie, what is meant by *Works*. Some think, that when Works are rejected as contributing nothing to our Justification, the Apostle means only the Works of the Ceremonial Law; such as Circumcision and Sacrifices, Washings and Purifications, the Observation of New Moons and Sabbaths, *&c.* for this was the great Dispute St. *Paul* had with the *Jews*, whether the Observation of the Mosaical Law were necessary to the Justification of Christians; and in this sence the Apostle with good reason asserts our Justification by Faith without Works. We are now justified by the Faith of Christ, not by the Rites and Ceremonies of the Mosaical Law.

Others, and with very good reason too, not only reject the Works of the Ceremonial Law, but also of the Moral Law, from the Justification of Sinners: Not as if Sinners could be justified without good Works; but that they are not justified by them; that is, that no Man is justified by the Merit of his own Works, but by the Merit and Expiation of the Death of Christ. But though no Man is justified or saved for the Merit of his Works, yet he may be judged according to his Works. Though no Man shall be saved by the Merit of his good Works,

Works, yet no Man ſhall be ſaved without Good Works, and wicked Men ſhall be damned for their Evil Works, which leaves room enough for our being judged according to our Works.

So that though we be not juſtified by Works, but by Faith, as St. *Paul* tells us, yet we muſt be judged by our Works; Wicked Men ſhall be condemned for their Wickedneſs, and none but good Men ſhall be juſtified and ſaved by the Merits of Chriſt; and who are Wicked, and who are Righteous, ſhall at the laſt Day be judged by their Works.

And indeed, this is plainly confeſſed by thoſe who contend moſt zealouſly for Juſtification by Faith alone, which makes this a very needleſs and impertinent Controverſie; as appears from their way of reconciling St. *Paul*, and St. *James*. St. *Paul* tells us, we are juſtified by Faith without the Works of the Law; St. *James* tells us, That *by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith only*, 2 Jam. 15. To reconcile theſe two great Apoſtles, they tell us, That the Man is juſtified by Faith, and his Faith is juſtified by Works: Now whether this be the true way of reconciling St. *Paul* and St. *James*, I ſhall not at preſent diſpute, but it grants all that I deſire, that notwithſtanding our being juſtified by Faith, we ſhall be judged by our Works; for whether a Man or his Faith be judged and juſtified by Works, I think is the ſame thing: For if the Man muſt be juſtified by Faith, and his Faith juſtified by Works, I doubt the Man cannot be juſtified without Works, unleſs he can be juſtified by

an

an unjustified Faith. Before Faith can justifie the Man, it must be justified it self, and Faith must be justified by Works; and what this differs from judging a Believer by his Works, I cannot tell. So that, as many Disputes as there are about Justification by Faith, we ought firmly to believe, that we shall be judged by our Works; for most of the Notions of Justification by Faith, in opposition to our Justification by Works, are very reconcilable with this Doctrine of being judged by our Works; and those that are not, are not so plain and certain, as it is, that we shall be judged by our Works.

3. However, since this is so plainly expressed in Scripture, that there is no avoiding it, nor any other possible sense to be made of it, whatever our Notions of Justification be, it is much the safest way, to believe and expect, that we shall be judged according to our Works; that if we live wickedly, we shall certainly be condemned at that Day; and though we shall be acquitted and finally absolved by the Mercies of God, and the Merits of Christ, yet not without Holiness, not without Good Works, not without partaking of the Divine Nature, and being conformed to Christ our Head. To entertain any other hopes will undo us for ever; for we shall be very ill prepared to give an account of our Lives and Actions, when our Lord comes to call us to an Account, if we can possess our selves with such Notions of Justification, as deliver us from the Fears of Judgment; if we can perswade our selves, that we shall not be judged

judged according to our Works, but by the Merits of Chriſt; that we ſhall not receive the things done in the Body, whether good or evil; but ſhall receive the purchaſe of Chriſt's Obedience and Righteouſneſs without regard to our own.

Theſe are the dangerous Concluſions, which ſome Men draw from their miſtaken Notions of Juſtification; and this is the great danger of ſuch miſtakes. While Men acknowledge the Grace of God, and the Merits of Chriſt in the Juſtification of Sinners, and believe that they ſhall be judged according to their Works, whatever other Diſputes there may be, there is no danger in them; but if Men by ſome uncertain Reaſonings can perſwade themſelves againſt the expreſs Declarations of Scripture, that they ſhall not be judged according to their Works, this will make them careleſs of a Holy Life; and then when Chriſt comes to Judgment, how Orthodox Believers ſoever they are, he will ſay unto them, *I know you not, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

2*dly.* But whatever Notions we have of Grace, nothing is more plain from the very Nature of Things, than that *the Righteouſneſs* of the Future Judgment conſiſts *in judging men according to their Works*; and therefore, if God judge the World *in Righteouſneſs*, he muſt judge every Man according to his Works.

For 1. The Righteouſneſs of the Future Judgment conſiſts in rewarding good men, and puniſhing the wicked, and in rewarding and puniſh-

puniſhing none elſe: Now there is no other diſtinction between Good and Bad Men, but what their Works make: He is a good Man, who does good; and he is a wicked Man, who does that which is wicked. As St. *John* tells us: *Little Children, let no man deceive you, he that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth Sin is of the Devil,* 1 John 3. 7, 8.

The Nature of Righteouſneſs is certain and unchangeable, and cannot alter with Mens Opinions of it. It is our likeneſs and conformity to God, to be righteous as He is righteous, and therefore is as immutable as the Divine Nature; God may change our Natures, and make a wicked Man holy by the Power of his Grace, but he cannot change the Nature of Vertue and Vice, no more than he can change his own Nature: He can't make a wicked Man to be a Saint while he lives wickedly; nor a Saint to be a wicked Man, while he lives in the Practice of Holineſs and Vertue: The Nature of Good and Evil can't be changed, and therefore a good Man cannot be wicked, nor a wicked Man good, without changing their Natures; and God cannot account a wicked Man righteous, nor a righteous Man wicked, without judging contrary to the Nature of Things.

It would be impoſſible for wicked Men, did they duely conſider this, to flatter themſelves, that God will ſo impute the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt to them, as to account them perfectly righteous, without any inherent Righteouſneſs of their own, or without doing righteouſly.

For

For when they know themſelves to be ſo far from being righteous, that they are very wicked, why ſhould they think, that God will judge of them otherwiſe than they are? That he *will call good evil, and evil good; light darkneſs, and darkneſs light; ſweet bitter, and bitter ſweet*; when he himſelf has pronounced a Woe againſt thoſe who do it, 5 *Iſa.* 20. I am ſure, a Righteous Judgment is to judge of things as they are, to judge Good to be Good, and Evil to be Evil; to judge the Tree by the Fruit; that a good Tree is that which bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil Tree which bringeth forth corrupt Fruit.

This is Truth and Righteouſneſs in judging of the Natures of Things; and Righteouſneſs in judging, as that ſignifies rewarding and puniſhing, is to reward and puniſh Men according to their Natures, Qualities and Deſerts; to reward thoſe, and thoſe only, who do ſuch things as deſerve a Reward, or at leaſt as make them capable of being rewarded; and to puniſh thoſe who do ſuch things as deſerve puniſhment; for to give every Man his Deſerts, is to judge righteouſly.

All this is very plain; and it is as plain, that Righteouſneſs and Vertue deſerve a Reward, and Wickedneſs deſerves to be puniſhed, and therefore a juſt and righteous Judge muſt reward good Men, and puniſh the wicked: This all Mankind agree in: they have no other Notion of judging righteouſly but this, to reward the Good, and to puniſh the Wicked; but to bleſs and proſper, and reward the wicked, and to puniſh the Good, is without diſpute con-

confessed to be unjust. Some Men dispute the essential difference between good and Evil; but all confess, that what we call Good, deserves Praise and Reward, and what we call Evil deserves Punishment; and this distinction between Good and Evil the Laws of all Nations make; and if this be accounted a righteous Judgment among Men, if God will judge the World, and judge in Righteousness, he also must judge Men according to their Works; unless he means something else by judging righteously, than what Mankind understand by it.

And thus he has every-where declar'd, he will do, as I need not prove to those who have read the Scripture. All the Threatnings both of the Law and the Gospel, are against the workers of Iniquity; all the Promises are made to Holiness and Obedience; and if this be the Rule of Righteousness and Justice, it must be the Rule also of a righteous Judgment: for to judge righteously, is to judge by the Rule of Righteousness.

Now if this be a righteous Judgment to reward or punish Men according to the Good or Evil they have done, how can God judge the World in Righteousness, if he does not judge Men according to their Works? If he should acquit the wicked, and bestow Heaven on them, or condemn any Good Man to Hell? For will any Man say, this is just? And therefore let the Grace of the Gospel be what it will, if it cannot make a wicked Man righteous without doing Righteousness, it can never make it just for God to save a wicked and ungodly

godly Man. The Grace of God cannot change the Natures of Things; Righteouſneſs and Juſtice is the ſame thing under the Goſpel, that it was under the Law; and therefore to judge righteouſly is the ſame thing too, and that always did, and always will ſignifie to judge Men according to their Works; to judge thoſe righteous Men, who do Righteouſneſs; and thoſe wicked Men, who do Wickedneſs; and to reward the Righteous, and puniſh the Wicked.

2*dly*. The Righteouſneſs of the Future Judgment conſiſts in the equality of it, to deal equally by all Men; now there is no other equal Rule of Judgment, but to judge Men by their Works; for there is nothing elſe for which all Mankind can be judged; and if ſome Men muſt be judged for the Good or Evil of their Actions, and equal Juſtice requires that all Men be judged by the ſame Rule, Men muſt either be judged by their Works, or by their Knowledge, or their Faith: As for Knowledge and Faith, it is evident that Mens natural Capacities, and the Circumſtances of their Lives, and Fortunes, and Educations, which are not of their own chooſing, and therefore cannot be imputed to them, make a very great difference. One Man has naturally a better underſtanding, a quicker Apprehenſion, a more piercing Judgment than another; or if their natural Abilities be equal, yet the Circumſtances of their Fortunes and Education make a difference: One is better inſtructed, trained up in the Art of Thinking, and Reaſon-

Reaſoning and Judging, and has leiſure and opportunity to improve his Knowledge by Study; while another as capable as he, is either ill taught, or not taught at all; or only taught the Art of Living in the World by Labour and Induſtry: That God might as well judge Men for being Rich or Poor, when their Fortune is not at their own diſpoſal, but owing to their Birth, or to proſperous and adverſe Events of Providence, as to judge Men by the different Degrees and Improvements of Knowledge.

Thus as for Faith, ſome never heard of Chriſt at all; or if they did, it was only under the Character of an Impoſtor, or of a Fable, but never had the true Reaſons of Faith explained to them; others have been very ill inſtructed in the Faith of Chriſt, and never had opportunity to rectify their Miſtakes; and yet as no Man is bound to know, what Nature does not reach, unleſs it be revealed to him; ſo no Man is bound to believe, what he has not ſo much as heard of, nor to believe every thing he does hear, without ſufficient Evidence; nor to receive the true Faith of Chriſt, which he was never taught: So that ſhould God divide the World at the Laſt Day, only into Believers and Infidels, this would be a very unequal diſtribution, becauſe great part of the World never had the Faith of Chriſt preached to them; and though Infidelity will condemn thoſe Men, who have been inſtructed in the Faith of Chriſt, and would not believe, yet it cannot in Reaſon and Juſtice be imputed to thoſe Men who never heard of Chriſt.

But

But now the Being and Providence of God, and the Differences of Good and Evil, are known to all Mankind; Nature teaches this, and therefore all Mankind are bound to know it, and all Mankind may be judged by this Rule, whether they know God, and worſhip him as God, and take care to do that which is good, and to avoid the evil. This account St. *Paul* gives us of it. *For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs. Becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them, for God hath ſhewed it unto them. For the inviſible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, ſo that they are without excuſe. Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned*, 1. Rom. 18, 19, 20, 21. And the ſame Apoſtle tells us, That *the Gentiles which have not the Law*, (no Divine written Law) *do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſciences alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another*, 2. Rom. 14. 15, 16.

So that all Mankind, even Heathens themſelves, have a natural Knowledge of GOD, and of Good and Evil, and therefore may be judged for what they know, and condemned by God for tranſgreſſing thoſe Laws of Righte-

ousness, for which their own Consciences condemn them, for this leaves them without Excuse. And if God will judge the Heathens by their Works, and condemn them for those sins they commit against the Light of Nature, an equal Justice requires, that Christians shall be judged by their Works also: For is it equal to damn a Heathen for those Sins, which a Christian may commit and be saved? Will equal and impartial Justice allow, that when a Heathen and a Christian are equally wicked, the Christian shall be saved, and the Heathen damned? Is not this to accept the Persons of Men in Judgment? To make a difference between the Men, when there is no difference in their Actions? And yet the same Apostle tells us, *There is no respect of Persons with God; for as many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law, and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law*, 2. Rom. 11, 12. And that this is the Rule of Judgment, *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel*, verse 16.

There is no other common and general Rule, whereby all Mankind can be judged, but only this, to render to every Man according to his Works; for there is nothing else, for which Men must be judged, that is common to all Men, but the natural Knowledge of God, and the differences of Good and Evil; Christians indeed know more than the Light of Nature taught Heathens, and therefore have more to account for, than Heathens have; but if Heathens shall be condemned for their

sins

ſins againſt the Light of Nature, if they ſhall be judged according to their Works, Chriſtians have more reaſon to expect this: For if God be a righteous and impartial Judge, he cannot condemn one Sinner for his Sins, and ſave another as wicked as he. The nature of Vertue and Vice is the ſame in all Mankind, whether Heathens, Jews, or Chriſtians, and deſerves in its ſelf the ſame Rewards and Puniſhments; if it be righteous in God to puniſh the Sins of Heathens, it is righteous in God to puniſh the ſame Sins of Chriſtians; to render to all Men, whoever they be, according to their Works; for this is to deal equally with all Men.

3*dly*. I add farther, that nothing elſe is the proper Object of Judgment, but the Good or Evil of our Actions, and therefore if we be judged at all, we muſt be judged for the Good or Evil we have done.

For does Judging ſignifie any thing elſe, but Examining what Good or Evil ſuch a Man hath done, and rewarding or puniſhing him according to the Good or Evil he has done? And therefore a righteous Judge cannot judge Men, cannot reward or puniſh them for that, which is neither Good nor Evil.

Now is there any thing good or evil, but Vertue or Vice? What is Knowledge good for, which does not direct and govern our Lives? What is Faith good for, which does not renew and ſanctifie us? Are there not very knowing and believing Devils? Does not Faith and Knowledge make every ſin we com-

mit againſt Faith, and againſt Knowledge the more inexcuſable? Does not our Saviour tell us, *That he who knows his maſter's will, and does it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes?*

What Merit or Vertue is there in a preſumptuous Reliance on Chriſt for Salvation, to *call him Lord, Lord, and not to do the things which he has commanded?*

And can we think then, that God will reward us for our Knowledge, or our Faith, and overlook all the Evils and Impurities of our Lives? Will he reward us for that which deſerves no Reward? And not puniſh us for that which deſerves Puniſhment? Is this to judge the World in Righteouſneſs?

This is abundantly enough to prove, that we muſt be judged according to our Works, that we muſt receive the things done in the Body, whether Good or Evil, ſince the Righteouſneſs of the Future Judgment makes this neceſſary.

3*dly*. Let us then conſider, how this matter may be reconciled, that we are ſaved by Grace, and juſtified by Faith in Chriſt, and yet muſt be judged by our Works. And this is very eaſily done; for we ſhall be judged by our Works, according to the gracious Terms of the Goſpel.

The Faith of Chriſt was never intended to give us a liberty in ſinning, or to excuſe us from the neceſſity of a holy Life; and as far as the neceſſity of Holineſs is reconcilable with the Grace of the Goſpel, ſo far our being judged by our Works, is reconcilable with our being ſaved

ſaved by Grace; upon the ſame Terms, that the Goſpel promiſes Pardon and Forgiveneſs, we ſhall be pardoned at the Day of Judgment; whatever the Goſpel promiſes to reward, ſhall be rewarded at the Day of Judgment; and thus we are judged by Grace and by Works too. This is eaſily underſtood by thoſe, who know any thing of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and therefore I ſhall at preſent but juſt mention it.

The Goſpel of Chriſt promiſes Pardon of ſin to true Penitents, who are heartily ſorry for their ſins, abhor themſelves for them, make reſtitution for the Injuries they have done to Men, beg God's Pardon in the Name and Mediation of Chriſt, and amend their Lives; for Chriſt has made attonement and expiation for ſuch Sinners; and therefore at the Day of Judgment, no Man ſhall be condemned for ſuch ſins as he has heartily repented of, and reformed: And this is to be judged by Grace, as well as by our Works; for the Law preſcribes our Duty, but promiſes no Pardon, no not to Penitents; this is owing to the Grace of God through the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt: But though the Grace of the Goſpel pardons true Penitents, yet the ſame Goſpel threatens eternal damnation againſt impenitent Sinners. *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs: to them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.* And therefore impenitent Sinners will be

1 Rom. 18.

2 Rom. 8, 9.

judged and condemned for their ſins at the laſt Day by the Mediatour of the Covenant of Grace, for the Goſpel it ſelf condemns them.

Thus *the grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, and hath appeared unto all men, teaches us, that*
2 Titus 11, 12. *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* And therefore, *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* Heaven is the Reward only of Good Men, who live in the Exerciſe of all Chriſtian Graces and Vertues; and therefore Good Men muſt be judged, muſt be rewarded according to their Works; and yet this is Goſpel-Grace too: For ſuch a glorious Reward as Heaven, is above the Merit of the moſt perfect Vertue in this World. The beſt Men cannot challenge ſuch a Reward from the Juſtice of God, and therefore it is owing to Goſpel-
6 Rom 13. Grace: the *Wages of ſin is death, but eternal life is the gift of God* (not the merit and deſert of our Works) *through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Eſpecially, when we conſider, that this great and perfect Reward is beſtowed upon a very imperfect Vertue; the Obedience of the beſt Men is very defective, ſtained and ſullied with humane Weakneſſes, Indiſcretions, Follies, Ignorances, Miſtakes, indecent Surprizes of Paſſion, or coldneſs and flatneſs of Devotion, and too often interrupted with wilful and ſcandalous Sins, ſuch as nothing but Grace can pardon, and therefore much more nothing but Grace can reward: And therefore Good Men are judged by Grace, and rewarded by Grace, though according to their Works.

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We are all Sinners, we are all obnoxious to the Juſtice of God, would he be extream to mark what is done amiſs; but ſince a perfect Vertue is not to be expected from Mankind in this lapſed ſtate, God is pleaſed to accept of ſincerity inſtead of perfection, and through the Merits of Chriſt, and Faith in his Blood, to account him a righteous Man, who ſincerely loves and fears him, and obeys his Laws, tho' with the Weakneſſes and Infirmities incident to Humane Nature. So that our being judged by our Works ſignifies no more, but that we are diſtinguiſhed by the Good or Evil we do, into Good or Bad Men, according to the favourable allowances of the Goſpel, and then Bad Men receive the juſt deſert of their ſins, and Good Men receive thoſe Rewards, not which they have merited, but which the Grace of God, and the Merits of Chriſt have prepared and purchaſed for them.

This is a plain account, how Chriſtians may be judged by their Works, and yet ſaved by Grace, and by Faith in Chriſt; and the Righteouſneſs and Equity of the laſt Judgment ſeems to entitle Heathens themſelves (tho' they have no Covenant-Right to it) to ſome degrees of this Grace: For I cannot think, that God in judging the World will deal more rigorouſly and ſeverely with Heathens, than he will with Chriſtians; that he will demand moſt where he has given leaſt, which is contrary to our Saviour's Rule of Judgment: And therefore I cannot but hope, that Chriſt in judging of their Works will make the ſame favourable allowances to them, which the Goſpel makes

to those who do believe in Christ: That is to say, that he will allow of the Repentance of a Heathen, if it were sincere and hearty, and did reform his Life, as well as of the Repentance of a Christian; that he will overlook the same Defects and Imperfections in the good Actions of Heathens, who lived Vertuous Lives, who worshipped the One true God, and observed the natural Rules of Sobriety, Justice, and Righteousness, that he will in the Actions of Christians. That if any Heathen should be found equally vertuous with the meanest Christian, who shall be finally saved, that Heathen at least will not be damned; and indeed would seem to have reason to complain of unequal usage, if he should. St. *Paul* tells us, both with respect to Jews and Heathens, as well as Christians, That *God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel.* And if the Gospel be the Rule of judging all Mens Actions, they must be all equally judged with respect to the Good or Evil of their Actions, and be judged as the Gospel judges.

I grant, the Heathens had no promise of Pardon upon their Repentance, but yet all Mankind believed so well of the Goodness and Mercy of God, that they hoped for Pardon upon their Repentance; thus we find the *Ninevites* did, and they had it; and indeed it was this perswasion, that taught them to pray to God, and to offer Sacrifices, which had been insignificant things, had they not been perswaded, that God both could, and would pardon sin, when Sinners repent.

Nor

Nor have the Heathens any Covenant-Title to Salvation, and yet they were generally perſwaded, that Good Men ſhall be rewarded, and the wicked puniſht in the next World, and their Conſciences did either condemn or abſolve, terrifie or comfort them, as ours do us; which are very vain hopes, if there be no Reward for them, though they ſhould obſerve the Laws of Vertue.

St. *Peter* tells us, what he had learnt from the Caſe of *Cornelius*, a *Roman* Centurion, but a devout Worſhipper of God, and one who gave much Alms: *Of a truth, I perceive that God is no reſpecter of Perſons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.* What does St. *Peter* mean? that God will accept Heathens, who are perfectly innocent and righteous, and never committed any ſin? He knew very well there were no ſuch Men in the World, much leſs among the Heathens; and therefore he muſt mean, that God will accept of all honeſt ſincere Worſhippers of him, though guilty of many Humane frailties, of what Nation ſoever they be. Acts 34, 35.

It is true, no Man's Sins ſhall be forgiven, nor his Vertue rewarded, but for the ſake of Chriſt, who is *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*; for there is no other Name given unto Men, whereby they can be ſaved, but only the Name of Chriſt; but if all, who ſhall be ſaved from the beginning to the end of the World, ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, as it is certain, they muſt be, if there be no other Name whereby Men can be ſaved; it is to be hoped,

hoped, that many Thousands will be saved by Christ at the Day of Judgment, who never had any explicite Knowledge or Faith in him: For though, I grant, God promised a Saviour to Man immediately after the Fall, and renewed this Promise to *Abraham*, and afterwards to *David*, and prefigured him in the Types and Sacrifices of the Law, yet Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins was never publickly preached in his Name, till he gave that Commission to the Apostles after his Resurrection from the Dead. And how little the Jews understood of the Nature or Office of their *Messias*, is very plain from the Ignorance of Christ's own Disciples and Apostles, who expected, that he should be a Temporal Prince and Saviour: and understood so little of his being a Sacrifice for Sin, or of their being saved through Faith in his Blood, that St. *Peter* himself could not with any patience hear of his dying; and when he was put to Death, his Disciples thought all their great hopes and expectations from him utterly disappointed, till they saw him again, after he was risen from the Dead. So that those Good Men, even among the Jews, who lived before Christ's appearing in the World, though they had the Promises of the *Messias*, yet do not seem to have had any explicite knowledge, what kind of Saviour the *Messias* was to be, nor by what means he should save us, though the Types, and Figures, and Promises of the Law, seem very plain to us now, since Christ expounded them to his Disciples, and they to us; and therefore they could not be saved by such a Faith in Christ's Blood, as is now required

quired from us; for they did not know, that he was to ſave us by the merit and expiation of his Death: And if thoſe Good Men might be ſaved by the Blood of Chriſt, who had no knowledge of his dying for our ſins, and therefore no explicite Faith in his Blood, why not thoſe alſo, who had never heard of Chriſt, if they lived ſo, as to be capable of Salvation? For that Promiſe of a Saviour made to *Adam* immediately after his Fall, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould break the ſerpent's head*, was in him made to all Mankind, who deſcend from his Loyns.

And though Chriſt has not been preached to all Ages, nor to all parts of the World, yet he is the Judge of all Men, and he judges as *Mediator between GOD and man*, as I obſerved before; and therefore judges all Mankind not by the Rules of ſtrict and rigorous Juſtice; for that is not the Office of the Mediator; but by the Mercy and Equity of the Goſpel.

This makes a very fair Repreſentation of the equal Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, and Mercy of the laſt Judgment: That no Man ſhall periſh meerly for the misfortune of his Birth; that he lived before Chriſt was preached to the World, or in ſuch Countries where Chriſt was never preached; but though the Goſpel was never preached to him, yet he ſhall be judged by Goſpel-Grace; and if he were a true Penitent, and a ſincere Worſhipper of God, ſhall have liberty to plead his Repentance, and the ſincerity of his Obedience, at the Tribunal of Chriſt, when he comes to Judgment; which will be ſo undeniable a Juſtification of the Righteouſ-

Righteousness of the Last Judgment, that were there no other reason for it, it would mightily incline any Man, who thinks honourably of God, to believe it.

And this will teach all Christians, what I am sure some have great need to be taught, that the benefit they receive by the Knowledge and Faith of Christ, is not to be saved upon easier terms than the rest of the World; for it will appear at the Day of Judgment, that a great deal more is expected from them, than from ignorant Heathens; but the true benefit of having the Gospel preached to them is, that they are more perfectly instructed in the Will of God, and the means of Salvation; have more express Revelations of the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life; have more express Promises of Pardon and Forgiveness; are delivered from the Cheats and Impostures of evil Spirits, and have the powerful Assistances of the Divine Grace; that is, all the Helps, Advantages, Encouragements, and Obligations, to improve in Christian Graces and Vertues, to avoid the threatned Miseries, and to obtain the glorious Rewards of the next life; this is an inestimable advantage, which we Christians enjoy above Jews or Heathens, which, if we improve well, we cannot fail of being happy for ever; we may by diligence and caution make our Calling and Election sure; these great advantages the Heathen World wanted, and therefore were over-run with Idolatry, and all manner of Wickedness, and seldom saw any great Examples of Vertue to shame them, or teach them better. This

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is a great difference God has put between us and the Heathen World; and we need not envy them as favourable a Judgment, as we hope to have our ſelves; for certainly they want it more; and therefore it becomes the righteous and merciful Judge of the World to give it them.

Thus we ſee in general by what Rule we ſhall be judged, and the Righteouſneſs of ſuch a Judgment; but there are ſome things, which though they have been briefly mentioned before, deſerve a more particular Conſideration.

As 1. Though we ſhall be judged for all the Good or Evil we have done, yet our Saviour in deſcribing the Proceſs of the Laſt Judgment, makes no mention of any thing, but Acts of Charity: 25. *Matt.* 34, &c. When he ſhall have *ſeparated the ſheep from the Goats, and ſet the ſheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left: then ſhall the king ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall the Righteous anſwer him, ſaying: Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee; or thirſty, and gave thee drink; or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee? And the king ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them: Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it to one of the leaſt*

of

of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying: Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying: Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as you did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, you did it not to me. This is ſo remarkable a difference, which our Saviour makes between Charity, and all other Graces, that it concerns us to take notice of it, and to enquire what the meaning of it is.

1. Now in the firſt place, there is no doubt, but our Saviour's intention in this was very powerfully to recommend all Acts of Charity to us, ſince Heaven is the peculiar Reward of Charity; and to make us as much afraid of all Uncharitableneſs, as we are of any other, the moſt enormous and flagitious Crimes, ſince Uncharitableneſs will damn us, though we were guilty (if that were poſſible) of no other ſin.

And there is great reaſon to enforce this Duty on us, becauſe few Men have ſo great a ſenſe of the Neceſſity and Obligations of Charity, as they have of Moral Honeſty and Juſtice. All Mankind have a natural ſenſe of the

the great evil of Rapine, and Injuſtice, and Murder; to defraud Men of their Eſtates, or to take them by force and violence, to oppreſs the Poor, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow, or to murder the innocent; their Conſciences terrifie and ſcare them with ſuch guilt; but they have but little ſenſe of the Obligations of Charity, and of the great ſin and danger of Uncharitableneſs; they can ſee Men hungry, and thirſty, and naked, and ſick, and in priſon, without miniſtring to them; and though they will acknowledge ſuch Acts of Charity to be very good and commendable, yet charge themſelves with no guilt for neglecting them: but if none ſhall be ſaved at the laſt Day, but the kind and the charitable; if we ſhall be condemned at the laſt Day, to that everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, for doing no good, though we ſhould do no other evil, as we certainly ſhall, if our Saviour gives us a true Account of the Proceſs of the laſt Judgment; this, if any thing will make Men ſenſible, how neceſſary it is to do all the Good they can, as neceſſary as it is to go to Heaven; that they may as ſafely, with reſpect to another World, rob, and ſteal, and cheat, and oppreſs, as not relieve the Wants of the Poor, as far as Chriſtian Prudence and Charity directs; for they ſhall be damned for this, as well as for the greateſt Injuſtice.

2*dly*. Our Saviour hereby ſignifies, that this Divine Charity is the perfection of all other Chriſtian Graces and Vertues, and comprehends them all; for it is certain, that no Man ſhall

shall be saved without an Universal Righteousness, and yet our Saviour enquires only after Charity, as the only mark and criterion of an Universal Righteousness; for where that is in sincerity, there is a combination of all other Graces. Our Saviour tells us, that the Love of GOD and Men, is the Sum of the whole Law and the Prophets, 22. *Matt.* 36, 37, 38, 39, 40. And St. *Paul* tells us, *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law —— Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law,* 13. Rom. 8, 9, 10.

He that loves his Neighbour will do him no hurt, but will do him all the good he can. And this Divine Love of Men, results from the Love of GOD, whose Creatures they are, and whose Image they bear, and therefore includes the Love of GOD as its cause; for there is no other Principle of Universal Love and Charity, though of particular Friendships there is: And therefore St. *John* makes this the Trial of our Love to God: *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? and this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loves his brother also,* 1 John 4. 20, 21. Thus much is certain from this Text, that no Man loves God, who does not love his Brother: and I believe, there never was an instance of true Universal Charity without the Love of God: But not to make a dispute of that (since Humanity, and Greatness, and Generosity of Mind will in some Men, very nearly resemble, and counterfeit an Universal

verſal Charity) the Charity our Saviour ſpeaks of, is this Divine Charity which flows from the Love of God and Chriſt, when we love Men for God's ſake, and Chriſtians as the Members, and the Brethren of Chriſt; and therefore he accounts all the kindneſs ſhewn to them for his ſake, as done to himſelf: *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

This Divine Charity contains the Exerciſe of all other Chriſtian Graces; where this is, no other Grace is wanting; It is the Univerſal Habit of Grace, the very Nature of God, for *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 John 4. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

But on the other hand, an uncharitable Man can have no good in him, and he has the Seeds and Principles of all Evil. Uncharitableneſs is owing to Self-love, and to the Love of this World; and where theſe two are, there can be no good, but there may be all the Wickedneſs that humane Nature is capable of.

So that this brings the Matter to a ſhort iſſue at the Day of Judgment, as our Saviour has here repreſented it: In order to our final Doom and Sentence, there needs but this one Enquiry, whether we were charitable, or uncharitable; for a Man who is poſſeſſed with this true Divine Charity, has all Chriſtian Graces; a Man who has not this Divine Principle, has no good in him, and that is enough to damn him, without enquiring what evil he has done.

It concerns us all ſeriouſly to conſider this; for if all uncharitable Men ſhall certainly be damned; Charity is the only certain mark, whereby we can judge of our future ſtate; whatever other good Qualities we ſeem to have, if we be not Charitable, there is nothing good in us, nothing that God will accept or reward; we ſhall be condemned to the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, with all our other glittering and counterfeit Vertues: but if to our other Vertues we add an univerſal Charity, we may then joyfully and ſecurely expect to hear from our Lord, when he comes to Judgment, *Come, ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* I ſay, if to our other Vertues we add Charity: For if we live in any wilful ſin, how liberal and bountiful ſoever we are to the Poor, this is not Charity. St. *Paul* ſuppoſes, That Men may give *their bodies to be burnt, and all their goods to feed* the Poor, *without Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 4. And though our Saviour only mentions the external Acts of Charity, in feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, and viſiting the ſick, and the Priſoners, becauſe he will not allow of the pretence of Charity, without charitable Actions, yet he ſuppoſes, that theſe charitable Actions flow from a true Principle of Divine Charity, from the Love of God and Men; which it is certain thoſe Men have not, who allow themſelves in any Wickedneſs. And therefore the plain ſtate of the Caſe is this: Whatever other Vertues we pretend to without Charity, will avail us nothing at the Day of Judgment; for the

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uncharitable Man ſhall certainly be condemned, though he were guilty of no other Crime; that how charitable ſoever we are to the Poor in all the external Acts and Expreſſions of Charity, this will avail us nothing, unleſs we diſcharge all the other Duties and Offices of Religion; becauſe where there is not an univerſal regard to the Divine Laws, there are charitable Actions without this Divine Principle of Charity; but when Men have a reſpect to all the Laws of God, and exerciſe themſelves in all the Acts of Kindneſs and Charity to Men, they unite the Principle and Practice, and have that Divine Charity, which our Lord will reward with the Kingdom of Heaven.

3*dly*. This is a manifeſt proof, that the Rewards of Good Men at the Day of Judgment, are wholly owing to the Grace of God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which confirms what I have already diſcourſed, that we are judged by Grace, as well as by our Works.

Chriſt has made atonement and expiation for our Sins; he has reconciled us to God by his Death, and that puts us into a capacity of Happineſs; but the reaſon our Saviour gives, why he adjudges Good Men to the Kingdom of Heaven, proves, that the Reward is of Grace, not of Debt. The only reaſon he aſſigns, is the kindneſs they have ſhewn to himſelf: *When I was an hungred, ye fed me; when I was thirſty, ye gave me drink; when I was naked, ye clothed me; when I was ſick, ye viſited me; when I was in priſon, ye came unto me.*

1. Now in the firſt place, it is a great Kindneſs and Grace to Man, that he ſhould reckon all Acts of Kindneſs done to Men, done to himſelf. That glorious Being, who needs nothing that we can do for him; from whom we receive the Power and Ability of doing any kindneſs; and yet, *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

2*dly*. And therefore he beſtows Heaven upon them, as a Reward of their kindneſs to himſelf; now we all know the difference between rewarding Kindneſſes, and paying Debts, or rewarding Men according to their Deſerts.

In rewarding Kindneſſes, we reward their Love, not their Works; we don't conſider what the Actual Service was, whether ſmall or great, but what the kindneſs and affection was that did it: If the kindneſs and affection was great, which would have done greater things if it could, the affection is valued and rewarded, though not the work, as our Saviour tells us, That *whoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a Diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward*, 10. Mat. 42. And the Apoſtle tells us, That *where there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not.* 2 Cor. 8. 12. But ſtill it is Grace which values and rewards the Affection, which is not conſidered at all in making a Bargain, which is ſo much Work, for ſo much pay.

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And therefore in rewarding kindneſſes, we have no regard to proportions, as we have in paying Debts, or rewarding Services. If we pay what we owe, that is all that Juſtice requires; if we pay a Labourer according to our Contract with him, or according to the common eſtimation of his Labour, this is all that is expected; but there is no Rule, no Proportion in rewarding Kindneſſes; where Men do not traffick for Kindneſſes (which is juſtly thought the moſt ſordid Spirit in the World) the leaſt external expreſſion of kindneſs we can ſhew, may have the greateſt Return, and no Man blames prodigality, or exceſs in ſuch Returns.

And thus it is here, our Saviour rewards our Kindneſs, not our Work, and that makes ſuch a vaſt diſproportion between the Work and the Reward, between ſome few acts of kindneſs done to Men, and the eternal Glories of the Kingdom of God. No Works we can do, can deſerve ſuch a Reward; but when Chriſt rewards our Kindneſs, not our Works, the Reward muſt bear proportion to his own Grace, not to our Deſerts; he may reward as liberally as he pleaſes, for when the Reward is of Grace, not of Debt, no Reward can be too great for infinite Grace to beſtow, though it may be too great for our Works to deſerve.

But this ſtill convinces us, that Heaven cannot be the Merit of our Works, but the Reward of our Charity; Works have a ſtinted Merit, and the beſt Actions we can do, cannot merit Heaven, but Grace may reward

Charity as it pleases, and nothing but Charity has any title to the Rewards of Grace; which justifies our Saviour's account of the Future Judgment, which assigns no other reason of bestowing Heaven upon Good Men, but only their Charity; for Works bear no proportion to such a Reward, and Grace can reward nothing but Charity; all our Acts of Kindness to Men, out of Love to God, and our Saviour Christ. All the expressions of our Love to God, and our Saviour Christ, may be rewarded by Grace, as we reward the Kindnesses which are shewn to us, without regard to the Merit of the Work, but we must do something to reconcile the Love and Favour of God to us, before we can expect the Rewards of Grace; and there is no other way, if I may so speak, of obliging God, but by doing good to Men for God's sake. This I take to be a very reasonable account of the great Rewards of Good Men, so vastly disproportioned to their Works, and very agreeable to our Saviour's Account of the Future Judgment, that God rewards our Love and Charity, not our Works, which makes the Reward not of Debt, but of Grace, which has no proportion but what Grace, the infinite Love and Goodness of GOD will give it, which lays all manner of Obligations on us to be very charitable; for if we would be rewarded by Grace, if we would be rewarded for Kindnesses, we must shew Kindness.

4*thly*. Our Saviour's Account of the Future Judgment with reference to the final Sentence of

of uncharitable Men, juſtifies the Righteouſneſs of it to all Mankind. For how can Sinners be ſaved, but by Grace? And what Title have thoſe to Grace and Mercy who will ſhew none?

Is there any thing in the World more hateful to Mankind, or which all Men think more deſerves puniſhment, than Ill-nature? And if God damn Men only for their Ill-nature, will not all Mankind juſtifie the Righteouſneſs of his Judgments? Will ſuch Men find any Apologiſts? Nay, can they Apologize for themſelves? And what is Uncharitableneſs but Ill-nature? What Cruelty and Barbarity is it to ſee Men want Food and Cloaths, and all the Neceſſaries of Life, (when we are ſatisfied their Wants are real, not counterfeit, nor to indulge their Idleneſs and Luxury) and not relieve them? If nothing but Ill-nature ſhall be damned, nothing but Ill-nature can complain of God; and there is no ſcandal in that.

But we muſt conſider Mankind as Sinners, obnoxious to the Judgments of God, who muſt be pardoned, before they are rewarded; now when both the Pardon and the Reward is wholly of Grace and Mercy, has that Man any Title to either, who will ſhew no Mercy? Is it reaſonable to expect, that God in meer grace and kindneſs ſhould beſtow Heaven upon that Man, who will not give a Morſel of Bread, nor a Cup of Drink to the Poor and Neceſſitous for God's ſake? Do Men deal thus with one another? Do we think that Man deſerves any kindneſs, who will ſhew none? That he ſhould be fed and cloathed, when he

is in want, who would never feed and cloath others? That he should be forgiven, who would never forgive?

Unless Sinners be saved by Grace, they can never be saved; for it is Grace must forgive those sins, which Justice would punish. It is Grace which must bestow Heaven on us, which is a Reward too big for our best Works to deserve, and therefore too big for Justice to give. If our sins be not pardoned, we must sink into Hell; and if we have no Title to the Grace of God, which alone can forgive sins, they can never be pardoned; and this gives a plain account, how Uncharitableness must necessarily damn us; for an Uncharitable Man has no Right to the Grace of God; Innocence may challenge Impunity, and meritorious Works may challenge a Reward, but nothing but Kindness can challenge Kindness; and as a Sinner cannot merit Heaven, so an unmerciful and uncharitable Man does not deserve to have it given him; and if Heaven be not given him, he can never have it; if his Sins be not pardoned by Grace, Justice must lay hold on him, and sentence him to everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

This is agreeable to the Reason of Mankind, it is what all Men approve, what all Men justifie; when it shall appear at the last Day, that though other sins have deserved Hell, yet it is only our uncharitableness that hinders our Pardon, and brings the Sentence of Condemnation on us, all Mouths will be stopped before God, Sinners themselves must confess the Righteousness of it; their own Consciences must

muſt tell them, that they have deſerved no Mercy, becauſe they have ſhewn none; and therefore we find in the account our Saviour gives us of it, that when he condemned theſe uncharitable Men to Hell, they made no exception againſt the Righteouſneſs of the Sentence, but only deny the Fact. *Lord, when ſaw we thee hungry, or thirſty, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee?* Tho' Mercy and Compaſſion, and Forgiveneſs becomes the God of Love, yet it does not unbecome Love it ſelf, infinite Love, to condemn Ill-nature to everlaſting Fire; and there is nothing elſe, which eternal and infinite Love will finally condemn and puniſh.

And this gives a plain account, why Forgiveneſs of Sins is promiſed to no other particular Grace and Vertue, but to Mercy and Charity: *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy*, 5. Matt. 7. And the Pſalmiſt tells us, That *with the merciful, God will ſhew himſelf merciful, but with the froward he will ſhew himſelf froward*, 18. Pſal. 25, 26. Our Saviour has taught us to pray for forgiveneſs, upon the Condition of our forgiving thoſe who treſpaſs againſt us; *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes*, 6. Mat. 14. 15. Which our Saviour repreſents at large in the Parable of the King, who called his Servants to an account, and finding one, who ought him Ten Thouſand Talents, and had nothing to pay, he commands him, and his Wife and Children to be ſold, and payment to be made;

but

but upon his earneſt importunity forgave him the Debt; this Servant meets his Fellow Servant who ought him an hundred Pence, and caſt him into Priſon, which his Lord hearing of, revokes his Pardon, and delivers him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him. *So likewiſe*, ſaith our Saviour, *ſhall my heavenly father do alſo unto you, if ye from you hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes*, 18. Matt. 23, *&c.* Thus St. *Peter* tells us, That *Charity*, all acts of kindneſs ſhewn to Men, *covereth a multitude of ſins*, 1 Pet. 4. 8. And the Prophet *Daniel* adviſes *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *break off his ſins by righteouſneſs, and his iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor.* Heaven it ſelf is promiſed to acts of Charity: *Give, and it ſhall be given unto you, good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom: for with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured unto you again*, 6. Luke 38. which plainly ſignifies the Rewards of the next Life. This is *to lay up treaſures in Heaven*, 6. Mat. 20. To *make to our ſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlaſting habitations*, 16. Luke 9. As our Saviour tells the rich young Man, If he would ſell all he had, and give to the Poor, he ſhould have Treaſure in Heaven, 19. Mat. 21. What is the meaning of this? Does the Goſpel preach Merit to us? muſt we merit forgiveneſs by forgiving? Muſt we purchaſe Heaven with our Money? Every body ſees, that this can be no Purchace, becauſe there is no Proportion in the value: But though

Charity

Charity cannot merit our Pardon, yet it deſerves ſome favour to be ſhewn it, and God will be merciful to thoſe, who ſhew mercy; though our Alms and Works of Charity cannot merit Heaven, yet they make us Friends, as our Saviour ſpeaks; and ſuch Friends as will receive us into everlaſting Habitations. They will make God and Chriſt our Friend, who will beſtow Heaven on us, not as the Merit of our Works, but out of Grace and Favour, which ſuch Acts of Charity deſerve.

This is a plain account, why our Saviour in the laſt Judgment takes notice of no other Works, but Acts of Charity, and ſhews us, how we may be judged by our Works, and pardoned and rewarded by Grace; and if this will not convince us of the neceſſity of Charity, it is in vain to urge any other Arguments.

2*dly*. Another Rule, and that a very righteous Rule of Judgment, is, that God will judge us according to our Receipts, as our Saviour expreſly tells us: *To whomſoever much is given, of them ſhall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, 12. Luke 48. As for the Righteouſneſs and Equity of this, our Saviour appeals to the Practice of Mankind; they think it very reaſonable to ask the more of him, to whom they have committed much. And we have no reaſon to complain of God, if he deals with us, as we think is juſt and reaſonable to deal with one another.

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There is no need to prove the Righteousness of this Rule, which all Men own and confess; but the consequence of it deserves to be considered by Christians, who have received so much more from God, than the rest of Mankind have done; for by this Rule at the Day of Judgment more will be required of us, than of the rest of the World, as we have received more.

Very few Christians seem to think of this, they pity the rest of the World, who, they say, are under the Law, and a Covenant of Works, by which no Man can be justified who is a Sinner, as all Men are, and therefore their Salvation is desperate; but a little matter will save a Christian, if he be a true believer; if they are but sorry for their Sins, and confess and bewail them before God, as often as they commit them, and trust in the Merits and Righteousness of Christ; nay, if they do but retract their wicked Lives with some dying Groans and Resolutions of living well, when they know they can live no longer; if they wish, they had lived better, when they come to die, and promise, that they would live better, if they could live over their Lives again, this will secure their Salvation; and this is the glorious Privilege they enjoy by being Christians, this is Gospel-grace, this is the Purchace of Christ's Blood.

But not to enter into this Dispute, which I have said enough of already, certainly these Men are mistaken, and these vain hopes will deceive them, if our Saviour's Rule be true, That *to whom much is given, of them shall be much*

much required: For has not God given more to us, than he has to the reſt of the World? And is that a reaſon, why he ſhould ask leſs? Let us briefly conſider what God has done more for us, than he has done for the reſt of the World, and ſee, whether what God has done more for us, does excuſe us from any part of our Duty; or rather whether it does not exact a more perfect Vertue from us.

The Goſpel of Chriſt has given us a more perfect knowledge of the Will of God, and of our Duty to him; nay, has given us a more perfect Law and Rule of Life, has in many inſtances advanced our Duty above what the Law of Nature, or the Law of *Moſes* required, at leaſt above what the generality of Men thought they did require: Now is this a Reaſon, why God ſhould excuſe us from doing our Duty, becauſe we know it better than other Men? Or why God ſhould expect leſs from us than from other Men, becauſe we know more? This is directly contrary to what our Saviour tells us: *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: but he that knew not, and did things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes,* 12. Luke 47, 48. This ſeems a hard ſaying, that he which *knew not,* ſhould be beaten at all, but our Saviour does not by this underſtand a total Ignorance, but an imperfect Knowledge, which will excuſe Men from ſuch parts of their Duty as they were ignorant of, if this Ignorance was not their own fault; but the more we know, the more is our Duty enlarged, and therefore as

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our Knowledge increases, our Account must encrease with it, and that will encrease our punishment, if we know the Will of God, and disobey it. Is there any use of Knowledge, but to direct our Lives? And could God then intend any thing in revealing his Will to us, but that we should obey it? The *Jews* had these vain Conceits; they boasted in Circumcision, and in their Knowledge of the Law, and condemned the Heathen World for those sins, which they themselves securely committed; as if they should be saved in *their* sins, because they knew the Law, which forbids them; but the Ignorant Heathens should be damned for *theirs*. But St. *Paul* very sharply and sarcastically exposes the Folly of this in the Second Chapter to the *Romans*, throughout the whole Chapter, which I would desire you seriously to read and consider, and then I need add no more about it.

The Gospel gives us a more abundant assurance of a future State, and of the Rewards and Punishments of it, than the World had before; for *life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel*; and the more certain our Faith and Knowledge is of another World, in all reason it may be expected to work more powerfully upon our Minds, to conquer all the Temptations of this Life, to terrifie us from every thing that is wicked; to make *us stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, as knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. The certainty of Faith is the strength and vigour of the Mind, and therefore every new degree of evi-

evidence requires proportionable degrees of reſolution, activity, caution, and circumſpection in doing our Duty; and as this is reaſonable to be expected, ſo God does expect it from us. *The times of ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead*, 17. Acts 30, 31. While Men were Ignorant of the other World, or had only ſome uncertain Reports of it, mixed with fabulous Stories to increaſe and nouriſh Superſtition, their Wickedneſs was very pitiable, and ſhall meet with a more favourable Judgment: But we can now pretend Ignorance no longer, and therefore now God commands us to repent. Upon this Principle it is, that our Saviour *upbraided thoſe Cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethſaida: for if the mighty works, which have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, who art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee*, 11. Mat. 20, 21, 22, 23. Thoſe mighty Works our Saviour wrought in theſe

theſe Cities, were ſuch powerful Convictions, as rendred their Infidelity inexcuſable, and that aggravated their Condemnation. And for the ſame reaſon our Saviour threatens that unbelieving Generation, who ſaw all his mighty Works, and heard his admirable Wiſdom, which was ſo much beyond whatever was ſeen or heard before. *The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in judgment againſt this generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it; for ſhe came from the uttermoſt parts of the earth, to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here*, 11. Luke 31, 32. The greater the Preacher is, the greater Works he does, and the greater Evidence he gives of his Divine Authority, ſtill the Guilt and Condemnation proportionably increaſes: And then the Infidelity of thoſe who live in a Chriſtian Nation, and the Wickedneſs of profeſſed believers, who have ſo much greater certainty of the Rewards and Puniſhments of the next World, than either *Chorazin*, or *Bethſaida*, or *Capernaum*, then had, exceeds them all, and their Puniſhments will proportionably exceed.

Thus the Goſpel has fully acquainted us with the whole Diſpenſation of Grace in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; That *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believes in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, 3. Joh. 16. That Chriſt *gave himſelf for us, to redeem*

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us from all iniquity, and to purifie to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works, 2. Tit. 14. That he has made Atonement for our Sins by his Blood: That *herein God hath commended his love towards us, that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us; that when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, 5. Rom. 8, 10. And *we know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor; that we through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9.

Here is a new Scene of Grace and Love opened, which the World was unacquainted with before, which preſents us with new Arguments, and lays new Obligations on us to ſerve God; Arguments and Obligations ſo endearing, ſo powerful, that one would think Humane Nature could not reſiſt them, could not get looſe from them. If we will not reverence the Authority of God, yet how can we reſiſt his Love? If it be not enough to entitle God to our Service, that he made us, ſhall we deny his Purchaſe too? When he has *bought us with a price*, the ineſtimable Blood of his own Son? Ought not *the love of Chriſt to conſtrain us*? Could he do any thing more for us, than redeem us from Death and Hell? Could he redeem us at a dearer rate, than with his own Blood? When he could get nothing by it, but the pleaſure and ſatisfaction of making us happy, and the Glory of being the Saviour of Sinners? It is a reproach to Humane Nature, to think that ſuch Love as this, ſhould not convert the World, and ſubdue Mankind to the Obedience of God. It is

plain, this gives God a greater Right to us than meer Creation, and therefore gives every sin of Christians a double guilt; if Heathens sinned against their Maker, Christians sin against their Maker and their Saviour too. And to sin against Love, against suffering, redeeming, forgiving, saving Love, is a very different thing from sinning against Authority. We may call it folly, or madness to disobey our Sovereign Lord, who can, and will punish our Disobedience; but to abuse, to affront, to grieve Love, is not the Sin of Men, though too many Men are guilty of it, but of a diabolical Nature. I have nothing to say of it, but that it is the greatest provocation in the World, and all Men think so; and thus much worse the sins of Christians are, than the sins of Heathens.

But the Love of God, and the Grace of Christ are not the only Motives and Arguments, which our Redemption by the Death of Christ furnishes us with, but there are a great many other, and such powerful ones, as must greatly aggravate our guilt to sin against them.

There is not a greater preservative against Sin, than to have a just sense of the Evil of it, and a thorough Conviction of God's irreconcileable Hatred and Displeasure against it, and that he will certainly punish it. Now indeed Nature does in some measure teach this; the Reason of Mankind condemns it, Modesty preserves us from some Sins, natural Aversions from others, till both the Modesty and Aversions of Nature are conquered by a Custom of sinning:

ſinning: But then on the other hand, the Inclinations of Fleſh and Blood very ſtrongly tempt us to ſome Sins, which are very grateful to Fleſh and Blood, and to other Sins, to gain opportunities to gratifie thoſe Inclinations; and when Men taſte the ſweets of Sin, and find the preſent Advantages of it, this bribes their Reaſon to ſpeak more favourably of it, and to attribute the ſhame and averſions of Nature to Education, and popular Miſtakes.

Thus though Men have a natural Senſe of God's diſpleaſure againſt Sin, and natural Conſcience threatens the Judgments of God againſt Sinners, yet the Experience of the World tells us, that moſt Men flatter themſelves, that God may be appeaſed and reconciled to them without forſaking their Sins: Not only the Heathens, but even *Jews* themſelves, thought this might be done by their Sacrifices, and the other external Rites and Ceremonies of their Religion, as appears from the frequent Complaints of the Prophets about this matter: And though it cannot be denied, but that many Chriſtians deceive themſelves with the ſame vain hopes, yet this is much more unpardonable in them, becauſe God has given a more undeniable proof of the evil of Sin, and his irrecoverable diſpleaſure againſt it, than either *Jews* or *Heathens* had. For can there be a more certain evidence of the evil of Sin, than the Death of Chriſt? He died for Sin, and as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Condemned ſin in the fleſh*, 8. Rom. 3. Not only condemned Sin by his excellent Sermons, wiſe Exhortations, ſharp Reproofs, and terrible Threatnings, while he lived in the Fleſh;

but by dying in the Flesh, by offering up his Body a Sacrifice for Sin. Whatever Christ suffered, was not upon his own personal account, but for Sin; and therefore what he suffered was the just demerit of Sin, or else he ought not to have suffered it: In him God shews us, what our Sins deserve; Infamy, Reproach, and utmost Scorn and Contempt, the Agonies of the Mind, the Pain and Torments of the Body, and Death it self: It was Sin, that was Crucified, that was exposed to all this Shame and Suffering in the Person of our Saviour; and therefore in his Sufferings, we have a lively Image of the Evil and Deserts of Sin; which is a more convincing and satisfactory evidence, than the fine and subtle Reasonings of Philosophy, which some Men cannot understand, and which none but purified Minds can feel.

And though God declared his great Love to Sinners in giving his own Son to die for them; yet hereby also he expressed his irreconcileable hatred against Sin: Sinners may be reconciled to God by the Death of Christ, but Sin never can; that is condemned, is crucified in the Death of Christ. Christ expiated Sin, and reconciles Sinners, by killing and destroying Sin, by putting it to Shame, and Death, upon his own Cross: And this is the Method of our Reconciliation to God in Conformity to the Death of Christ; *we must be crucified with Christ, must be planted into the likeness of his Death*; that is, we must crucifie Sin in us, *we must crucifie the flesh with its affections and lusts*; *we must die to sin, the body of sin must be destroyed, that we may no longer serve sin*;

for

for he that is dead, is freed from sin: as St. *Paul* argues, 6. *Rom.* and in several other places.

And do we need any other Proof of God's hatred of Sin, than that he gave his own Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin; that Christ could not expiate our Sins without undergoing that Infamy, and Scorn, and Pain, and Death, which is the desert of Sin; that the Death and Destruction of Sin is represented in that very Sacrifice, which expiates our Sins, and must be acted over again in us, in the real Crucifixion and Death of Sin, before we can have any Interest in the Expiation of Christ's Death: And can there be a more powerful Dissuasive from Sin than this?

Thus it is a mighty encouragement to Repent of our Sins and forsake them, to be assured of Pardon and Forgiveness, if we do: Now whatever Reasons *Jews* and *Heathens* had to hope for Pardon upon their Repentance, it is certain they had not that assurance, which the Death and Sacrifice of Christ gives us. We have now an express Covenant of Grace and Pardon sealed with the Blood of Christ, who is that *lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*; and God cannot condemn repenting Sinners, without denying the Purchase of Christ's Blood, that *precious Blood* of infinite Price and Value; that Blood, which our great High Priest hath carried into the Holy of Holies, and which there pleads the Pardon of penitent Sinners at the Throne of Grace. God cannot deny himself, cannot deny his own Covenant, cannot deny his Son's Blood, *which*

speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; cannot deny our great High Priest, *who appeareth in the presence of God for us*, who died for us, *and now liveth for ever to make intercession for us*; And he who wants greater security than this, must tell us what greater security Sinners can have, than the Oath and Covenant of God, and the Blood and Intercession of Christ.

When I consider this matter, with what infinite Wisdom God has contrived the Redemption of Sinners, to cure the Degeneracy of our Natures, and to raise us to a perfect Vertue, to bind us faster to himself in those soft and charming Fetters of Love, to spur us forward with all the Zeal and Impetus that Hope and Fear, and Indignation, and Love, the Passions and Paroxysms of a divine inflamed Love can give us: It amazes me to think, that any Christians should flatter themselves, that Faith in Christ will save them without Works; that there is less need for them to be so exact and circumspect in their Lives; that Sin is not so damning a thing now, since Christ has made atonement for it, and reconciled God to Sinners, as it was before; Had they no Saviour indeed, it would concern them to be very good, when they must merit for themselves; had they not such a meritorious Sacrifice for Sin, and such a powerful High Priest, it would be a very dangerous thing to commit sin; but now Christ has Righteousness and Merit enough for us all, and we need none of our own, nothing but Faith to apply his Righteousness to us; Christ has pulled out the Sting of Sin, that it cannot greatly hurt; it cannot kill a Be-

a Believer; though it may ſlightly wound him, and draw ſome tears of Repentance from him; and that heals all again.

This, if any thing in the World, is *to turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*, to be wicked, becauſe God is good, to *ſin, becauſe grace does abound, whoſe damnation is juſt.*

I beſeech you, for the Love of Chriſt, and for the Honour of his Undertaking, of his Death and Interceſſion for us, to conſider this a little better. Conſider what the Goſpel teaches us to believe of Chriſt, and how abſurd and contradictious it is to ſay, that ſuch a Faith will ſave us without holineſs and purity of Heart and Life. Do you not believe, That *Chriſt gave himſelf for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, 2. Titus 14. And is it reaſonable to think, that our believing this, will ſave us, unleſs we be *redeemed from all iniquity*, unleſs we be *purified*, unleſs we be *a people zealous of good works?* If Chriſt ſaves thoſe who are *not redeemed from all iniquity*, who are *not purified*, who are *not zealous of good works*, it is certain he muſt ſave thoſe for whom he did not give himſelf, or muſt ſave them contrary to his own intention of giving himſelf for them; but however, to believe that Chriſt gave himſelf for us, *to redeem us from all iniquity*, does not ſeem to be ſuch a Faith, (if our Faith be true) as will juſtifie us without being redeemed from all Iniquity.

I ſhall add but one thing more, wherein Chriſtians have a great advantage of Jews and Heathens, and have received more from God,

than they; I mean, the plentiful Effusions of the Holy Spirit on the Christian Church. I dare not say, that Heathens themselves wanted all internal assistances to Vertue; for I can by no means perswade my self, that God who is an Infinite Spirit, should for so many Ages together, have no commerce with Mens Minds and Spirits; that he who governs the inanimate World, who steers the Motions of the Heavens, and keeps Nature in its regular course, should wholly neglect the rational World, and the moral Springs of Action, should not influence the Thoughts and Passions of Men, should not lay invisible Chains on their Lusts, nor inspire them with great and vertuous Designs; especially since he is a great Lover of Vertue, and abhors Vice, and knows the corruption and wickedness of Humane Nature, without some restraints; and its weakness and indisposition to Vertue, without divine impulses. I am sure Heathens themselves called Vertue the Gift of God, and ascribed all extraordinary Excellencies and Perfections of Men, to the secret Influences and Assistance of their Gods.

Nunquam vir magnus sine Divino afflatu.

The *Jews* had these Internal Assistances to illuminate their Minds, to influence their Wills, to direct their Choice, to give warmth and vigour to their Affections; as is plain from the Psalms of *David*, wherein there are many Prayers to this purpose, which prove what his Belief was; for had he not known, that the Divine Spirit did use to assist good Men, he would not have prayed for such assistance; and yet this he frequently does: *O that my*

ways

ways were directed to keep thy Statutes. With my whole heart have I ſought thee, O let me not wander from thy commandments. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, O teach me thy ſtatutes. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a ſtranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments from me. Make me to underſtand the way of thy precepts.— Strengthen thou me, according to thy word. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy precepts. — Give me underſtanding, and I ſhall keep thy law.— Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs. Turn thou mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way. And in his Penitential Pſalm he prays: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me: reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit.*

119. Pſal. 5. 10, 14, 18, 19, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 37.

51. Pſal. 10, 12.

But as devout Men among the *Jews* had a greater Portion of the Holy Spirit, than the Heathens had, ſo there was ſtill a more plentiful effuſion of the Holy Spirit on the Chriſtian Church, not only in thoſe miraculous Gifts and Powers, which were beſtowed upon the Apoſtolick Age, and continued in ſome meaſure in after Ages, till Chriſtianity was well planted in the World, but as to the renewing and ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit. We are now born not only of Water, but of the Spirit, in Baptiſm, 3. *John* 5. *And by one ſpirit we are all baptized into one body* —— *And have been all made to drink into one ſpirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. So that at Baptiſm we are born of the Spirit, which ſignifies that the Holy Spirit gives Life, and is a new principle of Life to

us;

us; in the Lord's Supper *we drink into one Spirit*; which ſignifies the freſh Supplies and Communications of Grace, as we daily receive new ſupplies of Spirits from our natural Meat and Drink: and I know not, how we ſhould have the Spirit in a more perfect manner, than as a conſtant Principle of Spiritual Life.

But it is not my buſineſs to prove, what all Orthodox Chriſtians own; that the Holy Spirit is more plentifully beſtowed upon the Chriſtian Church, than ever it was upon Jews or Heathens, which makes our Obedience to the Divine Laws more eaſie by encreaſing our ſtrength, and exacts from us more perfect Attainments, as we all expect more perfect Services from our Children, as their Age and Strength increaſes.

All this God has done more for us Chriſtians, than he has done for the reſt of the World, and all this which he has done more for us, makes it our Duty to live better, and to do more Service for God than other Men, and that makes it very juſt for God to expect more from us, and that proves he does ſo, and then we ſhould conſider, *what manner of Perſons* we Chriſtians *ought to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs.* If Heathens ſhall be damned for their ſins againſt the weak and glimmering Light of Nature, and the feeble Convictions of a natural Conſcience, corrupted by Education, by Examples, by prevailing Cuſtoms, by the Cheats and Impoſtures of wicked Spirits, what ſhall the Condemnation of Chriſtians

ſtians be *who neglect ſo great Salvation*; who *when light is come into the world, love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil:* who ſin againſt the clear and bright Light of the Goſpel, againſt the Love of GOD, againſt the Grace of CHRIST, againſt the powerful Reſtraints and Aſſiſtances of the HOLY SPIRIT? *If thoſe that deſpiſed Moſes's Law, died without mercy, under two or three Witneſſes: of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the ſon of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace,* 10. Heb. 28, 29. Which is true, not only of final Apoſtaſie, but of all wilful Diſobedience. The Grace of the Goſpel makes our Work eaſie, but our Duty more, and the danger of a miſcarriage greater. It does not require unſinning Obedience, but it requires greater meaſures of Purity and Goodneſs, and Univerſal Righteouſneſs, and has threatned an hotter Hell againſt wicked Chriſtians.

Thus Chriſtians will have a greater Account to give than Jews or Heathens, becauſe they have received more; and as the Receipts of Chriſtians are very unequal, ſo their Accounts will proportionably differ. Some Chriſtians have but One Talent, others Two, others Five, and as no Man ſhall account for more than he has received, ſo how much ſoever we have received, we muſt account for it all. This needs no Proof, and it has been ſufficiently explained and applied above.

The

The Conclusion.

How to know what our Sentence will be at the laſt Judgment: With an Exhortation to Reverence our own Conſciences.

HAving thus largely diſcourſed concerning a Future Judgment, I need not mind you of what Concernment it is, to know what Sentence Chriſt will paſs on us at that Day; whether *Come ye bleſſed of my father*, or, *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire.* For if we muſt be Happy or Miſerable for ever, how can we content our ſelves to live in doubt and ſuſpence, which of theſe ſhall be our Portion? What a Hell is this to live in perpetual fear of Hell? How can we ſleep without dreaming of Lakes of Fire and Brimſtone, without the frightful Apparitions of damned Spirits! what a tranſporting foretaſte would it give us of the Joys of Heaven to read our Names written in the Book of Life! to ſee a Crown, a bright and glorious Crown prepared for us! But how ſhall we know this? Who ſhall ſearch the Records of Heaven for us? The Anſwer is plain; we need not aſcend up into Heaven for it, we have the counterpart of thoſe Records in our own breaſts. *For*, as St. *John* tells us, *if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things: beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God,*

God, 1 John 3. 20, 21. That is, if our Heart or Conſcience condemn us, then God will condemn us, for he knows more of us than our own Conſciences know, he knows us better than we know our ſelves; and if we know ſo much wickedneſs by our ſelves, that we cannot but condemn our ſelves, (though every Man is a favourable Judge of himſelf) God, who knows a great deal more of us, muſt condemn us alſo: But if our Conſcience condemn us not, if it acquit and abſolve, *then have we confidence towards God*, a great and ſure hope in God's Mercy; that he will not condemn us: We cannot have the confidence of innocent Men, becauſe we have been Sinners; but we may have the humble confidence and aſſuring hopes of returning and repenting Prodigals, and of Dutiful and Obedient Children.

That this is ſo, the Apoſtle's Authority is ſufficient to convince us; and yet if the Apoſtle had not ſaid it, the Reaſon and Nature of the thing ſufficiently proves it.

God has given us a certain Rule, whereby we ſhall be judged, which I have now explained to you: And therefore ſince God will Judge us by this Rule, if we alſo judge our ſelves by it, we may certainly know what Judgment God will paſs on us: For neither God, nor our own Conſciences can miſtake in their Judgment; and when the Rule is the ſame, and there can be no miſtake on either ſide, the Judgment muſt neceſſarily be the ſame; and then the ſame Judgment our own Conſciences make of us, God will make: If they condemn us, God will condemn us alſo; if they con-

condemn us not, neither will God condemn us; then *we ſhall have confidence towards God.*

There needs no Proof of this, if you will but confeſs, that every Man knows himſelf, what his own Life and Actions are, and that God knows every Man better than he knows himſelf. If we know our ſelves, and know our Rule; if we know what we ought to do, and what we have done, we can certainly tell, whether we have done our Duty, or not: If our own Conſciences condemn us, it is certain we have not done our Duty; that we either do what we know we ought not to do, or leave undone what we know we ought to do; for no Man in his wits will accuſe himſelf wrongfully. Now if this be our caſe, our Conſciences do very juſtly condemn us, and then God, who knows us as perfectly as our own Conſciences, muſt condemn us alſo: For a guilty Sinner, who is guilty to his own Conſcience, can never eſcape the Condemnation of a juſt and righteous Judge, if he know his guilt.

Did earthly Princes or Judges as certainly know the Crimes which every particular Man is guilty of, as God knows the Sins of all Men, with the particular Circumſtances and Aggravations, every Malefactor, who knows what Law he has broken, and what is the Puniſhment of the breach of ſuch Laws, might certainly know what his condemnation will be, if he meet with a righteous Judge.

But

But earthly Judges do not always know Mens perſonal Guilt, or want Evidence to prove it; and thus many Criminals, whoſe own Conſciences condemn them, may eſcape the Condemnation of Men; but God knows more of us than our own Conſciences, and needs no other Evidence againſt us, but our own Conſciences, to condemn us. Earthly Judges are not always upright in their Judgment, fear or favour may pervert their Juſtice; but God is the judge of all the World, and therefore Supream Rectitude and Juſtice; that no Sinner can hope to eſcape his Juſtice, whoſe own Conſcience condemns him; for if God ſhould not condemn ſuch Men, he would be leſs juſt than the Conſcience of a Sinner.

But you'll ſay, the Mercy of God and the Merits of our Saviour may pardon a Sinner, whoſe Conſcience condemns him, though Juſtice can't. I anſwer, No: If Conſcience condemns according to the Rule of the Goſpel, it condemns both for the Juſtice and for the Mercy of God; for the Goſpel is the Goſpel of Grace, and contains all the Mercy that God hath promiſed to Sinners; and if Conſcience judging by this Rule condemns a Sinner, the Mercy of God will not ſave, to be ſure Goſpel-Grace and Mercy, his own Conſcience being Witneſs, cannot ſave him; and therefore his Salvation is hopeleſs, while he continues in this ſtate. No Man's Conſcience which is not diſturbed, or miſguided, of which more preſently, will abſolutely condemn him without ſome notorious and manifeſt guilt, and

and the Mercy of the Goſpel cannot ſave ſuch a Man. He muſt be conſcious to himſelf, that he lives in the Commiſſion of ſome known Sin, or in the habitual neglect of ſome known Duties, without Repentance and Reformation, before he will peremptorily condemn himſelf; and the Grace of the Goſpel will not pardon wilful, impenitent, unreformed Sinners.

Thus on the other hand; if *our conſciences do not condemn us, then we have confidence towards God.* If we have *a conſcience void of offence both towards God, and towards man:* If we have *the teſtimony of our conſciences, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, we have had our converſation in this world.* If we ſerve God with ſuch Zeal, and Vigour, and Activity, if we ſo *abound in the work of the Lord*, in all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs, and Charity, that our own Conſciences approve and commend us for it, this will give us a ſecure hope in God's mercy, ſuch a hope, *as will not make us aſhamed*, as will not deceive us. *Though we know nothing by our ſelves*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *yet are we not hereby juſtified, he that judgeth us is the Lord*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. In this caſe it is true alſo that *God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*, and therefore he may obſerve thoſe defects and imperfections in us, which we do not obſerve in our ſelves, that the moſt innocent and vertuous Man dares not challenge Heaven as his Merit and Deſert, but yet expects and hopes for a Reward from the Mercies of God, has *confidence towards God.*

A Man's own Conſcience cannot deceive him in this. Every Man muſt know, whether he carefully avoid all known and wilful ſins, whether he diſcharge all the eſſential parts of his Duty to God and Men, eſpecially when he does any eminent Services for God, and becomes an Example of Piety and Vertue. A Man, whoſe Conſcience gives this Teſtimony to him, may ſecurely hope and rejoyce in God; for whatever other defects the pure Eyes of God may ſee in him, they are all within the Grace and Mercy of the Goſpel, and therefore cannot hinder his Pardon or his Reward.

Thus we ſee, that when Conſcience abſolutely condemns, or when without any doubt or heſitancy it commends, acquits, and abſolves, its Sentence is a Divine Oracle, and aſſures us what our Judgment ſhall be at the laſt Day, if we be then found in ſuch a ſtate: But there is a middle ſtate between theſe two, which deſerves to be conſidered: When Men are neither ſo wicked, as to be abſolutely condemned by their own Conſciences, nor ſo good, as to be acquitted and abſolved, which is an uncertain ſtate between hope and fear. This is the caſe of thoſe Men, who have been guilty of very great ſins, which they had lived in many years; and though they are very ſenſible of their paſt Wickedneſs, and heartily ſorry for their Sins, and ſeriouſly reſolved by the Grace of God to forſake them; yet they are not ſatisfied of the ſincerity of their Repentance, becauſe they have not with all their Sorrow and Reſolutions conquered their Incli-

nations to sin, nor broken the habits of it; but are guilty of frequent Relapses, and fall into the commission of the same sins again; and then repent and resolve again; and as time wears off their sorrow for their last Offence, their old Inclinations revive, and a new Temptation conquers again: Now such Mens Consciences neither absolutely condemn, nor absolutely acquit them, for the Event is doubtful: They are not Conquerors yet, and it is uncertain, whether ever they will conquer; and therefore their Consciences cannot yet speak Peace to them; and yet they are not perfect Slaves and Captives to Sin, but contend for their liberty, and therefore their Consciences do not absolutely condemn them; but as they prevail or yield, so their hopes or fears encrease.

And this also is the case of those Men, who, if they commit no notorious wickedness, yet do very little good, nothing that their Consciences can commend them for: Who worship God rather in compliance with the Custom of the Place they live in, than from a vital Sence and Reverence of God, and therefore are not for any Works of Supererogation: A little will content them, and they are glad of any excuse to lessen that little; and all Men, who pretend to greater Devotion, they suspect of Hypocrisie, and some secular Interests.

As for Charity, though they must own Charity to be a Vertue, yet when any particular Act of Charity is pressed on them, they never want Arguments to prove, either that it

it is not Charity, or that they are not concerned in it; whatever kindneſſes they do for others, are extorted by great importunity, and done very thriftily, juſt as Men do, what they have no mind, nor inclination to. Now theſe Men commonly are pretty quiet and ſecure, unleſs ſomething extraordinary awaken them; for they do nothing greatly to terrifie their Conſciences, nor any thing to pleaſe them; and therefore their Conſciences neither abſolve nor condemn. Such Men don't well know what to think of themſelves, nor do they much think of theſe matters: If they be gay, and in good humour, all is very well; if any croſs accident diſturbs them, and makes them thoughtful, and fall out with this World, or works upon a Melancholy Conſtitution, then they are over-run with black and diſmal Thoughts, and all the Miniſters in the Neighbourhood are ſent for to anſwer Caſes of Conſcience, and to ſpeak ſuch comfort to them, as their own Conſciences cannot, and will not ſpeak.

Now this caſe our Apoſtle took no notice of, for indeed nothing is to be ſaid to it: Such Men cannot know by the Judgment of their own Conſciences, what Judgment God will paſs on them, becauſe their Conſciences paſs no certain Judgment on them; but when Conſcience does give Judgment of us, when it abſolutely acquits, or abſolutely condemns us, we may depend on it, that God will judge us, as our Conſciences do.

There are ſome Objections, againſt this, which are eaſily anſwered from that plain ſtate of the caſe, which I have now given. As to name ſome:

There are a great many very Bad Men, who go on in their ſins without any checks and rebukes of their own Conſciences, much more without being condemned by them; and will not God condemn theſe Men, becauſe their own Conſciences do not condemn them? Yes, no doubt but he will; for he will condemn all Bad Men, whether their own Conſciences at preſent condemn them or not. But by *not condemning*, the Apoſtle means, acquitting and abſolving; which theſe Mens Conſciences do not: Though they do not condemn, they do not commend, nor abſolve neither; that is, they paſs no Judgment at all, but are ſeared, and ſtupified by Atheiſm, or a long Cuſtom in ſinning. When Conſcience does judge, and does not condemn, God will not condemn neither; but there is a great difference between not judging and not condemning, and therefore notwithſtanding what the Apoſtle ſays, God may condemn, when Conſcience does not judge, though he will not condemn, when a judging Conſcience does not condemn. And the difference between theſe two; between not judging, and not condemning, is very evident; for it is often ſeen, that Men whoſe Conſciences have given them no diſturbance for many Years, in a courſe of ſin; that is, have never judged them; yet whenever their Conſciences are awakened, (as they ſometimes are by ſevere Providences, or at leaſt by the

the approach of Death) then they condemn them, and fill them with Terrour and Amazement.

There are other Bad Men, who do very wicked things, and yet their Conſciences are ſo far from condemning them, that they commend and applaud them. Nay, we know there have been thoſe, whoſe Conſciences have indulged them in all manner of wickedneſs, and flatter'd them into an Opinion of their being great Saints, and dear to God all the while: And will not God condemn theſe Men, becauſe their Conſciences do not condemn them; but promiſe them, not only Impunity, but great Rewards?

Thus on the other hand, many very good Men, who to all appearance have lived very innocent and vertuous Lives, fall under great Diſorders of Mind; and not only condemn, but paſs a final irreverſible Sentence upon themſelves; That they are not only at preſent in a ſtate of Damnation, but that it is impoſſible for them ever to get out of it, and that they muſt be certainly damned: Now will God condemn theſe Good Men, becauſe their Conſciences condemn them?

I have put theſe two Caſes together, becauſe the ſame Anſwer will ſerve both. This is not the Judgment of Conſcience, which St. *John* ſpeaks of, but the Judgment of Opinion, and miſtaken Notions in Religion, or of Melancholy, and a diſtempered Fancy.

The Judgment of Conſcience is that Judgment which we paſs on our ſelves, from comparing our Lives with the Rule whereby we ſhall be judged; and this Judgment cannot deceive us; for if we judge of our ſelves by the ſame Rule, by which God will judge us; every Man knows himſelf ſo well, that he cannot miſtake; and when GOD and Conſcience judge by the ſame Rule, their Judgment muſt be the ſame: But if we will alter our Rule of Judging; if Conſcience judge by one Rule, and God by another, then there is no wonder if their Judgments differ; if GOD condemn thoſe whoſe Conſciences acquit them, and abſolve thoſe whoſe Conſciences, or rather whoſe private Opinions and Fancies condemn them.

This is plain from the inſtances before us; ſome Men juſtifie themſelves in doing very wicked Actions; but the reaſon is, becauſe they miſtake the Nature of Things, they call Good Evil, and Evil Good; and then their Conſciences applaud and commend them for doing that, which is very wicked, but which they call good. As our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, *The time cometh, when every one that killeth you, will think that he does God good ſervice*, 16. John 2.

Others, who know they are guilty of very great wickedneſs, are yet very confident of their Salvation, and full of aſſurance, becauſe they do not judge of themſelves by the good or evil which they do, but rely upon other marks and evidences for their Salvation; Raptures,

tures, Extaſies, Enthuſiaſms, a preſumptuous Faith in Chriſt, an ineffectual ſorrow for ſin, ſome arbitrary and fanciful ſigns of Election, &c. Now indeed, theſe Mens Conſciences do condemn them, for they accuſe them of great Wickedneſs; but they will not believe the Judgment of their own Conſciences, but judge of their final ſtate, by their own miſtaken Fancie and Opinion; and therefore according to the Apoſtle's Rule, God will condemn theſe Men, for their own Conſciences condemn them, though they will not believe the Judgment of their Conſciences; but juſtifie themſelves in contradiction to it, when Conſcience condemns.

Other Men, who are not condemn'd by their own Conſciences; that is, who cannot charge themſelves with any great guilt, who are not conſcious to themſelves, that they have lived in any known Sin, or in the habitual neglect of any material and eſſential part of their Duty, yet they ſtrongly fanſie, that GOD will condemn them, that they are under the Sentence of Reprobation, that they have ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, though what that Sin is, they know not: They want the Teſtimony of the Spirit to aſſure them of their Election; they have never felt the Spirit of Bondage, and therefore they fear, they have not the Spirit of Adoption; that is, they have never felt the Horrors and Agonies of guilty Sinners, becauſe by the Grace of GOD, and the Bleſſing of a pious and vertuous Education, they have always been preſerved from thoſe fright-

ful sins which amaze the Conscience; and therefore they fear it is but a false Peace they feel, that God is not in this soft and calm Voice of Conscience, because they have never heard nor seen the Thundrings and Lightnings from Mount *Sinai*: Or though they maintain a great Reverence for God, and worship him with all humility of Soul and Body, yet they do not feel those flights of Devotion, these melting and languishing Passions, which some Good Men feel; or if at any time they are transported beyond themselves, and feel their Hearts all on fire with Love and Devotion, these Fits are but short, these Boilings and Fermentations go off, and they return to a calm and even Temper, and then they think they grow cold, and that the Spirit of GOD hath forsaken them: Now it is plain also, that these Mens Consciences do not condemn them, for they charge them with no such guilt, as the Gospel of Christ will condemn them for, but they are condemned only by false Opinions, or by a misguided and disturbed Fancy. In both these Cases Men absolve or condemn themselves, not by the Judgment and Testimony of Conscience, but by their mistaken Notions and Opinions, and God is not concerned to confirm and to ratifie such a Judgment.

The Sum is this: When St. *John* tells us, That if our Conscience condemn us, God will condemn us; but if our Conscience do not condemn us, neither will God condemn

us;

us: He means by *Conſcience*, that Judgment, which Men make of themſelves, by comparing their Lives and Actions with the Rule, by which GOD will judge us; for Conſcience judges, not by making new and arbitrary Rules of Judgment, but by giving Teſtimony to our Lives and Actions. The Judgment of Conſcience is no more but this, Whether we have obeyed, or diſobeyed the Laws of the Goſpel; whether we have done thoſe things, which the Goſpel threatens to puniſh, or which it promiſes to reward; but when we judge our Actions by falſe Notions of Good and Evil, contrary to the Goſpel of our Saviour, we judge by a falſe Rule, and then our Judgment muſt be falſe; and when we judge our ſelves not by the Nature of our Works, as God will judge us, and as Conſcience judges, but by Opinions and Fancies, and ſome Arbitrary and Enthuſiaſtick Marks and Signs, this is not the Judgment of Conſcience, which judges only of our Works, but the Judgment of private Opinions, Conceits and Fancies; and though God will judge us, as Conſcience judges, yet he will not judge us, as Opinion, Fancy, Enthuſiaſm, or Melancholy judge us.

Thus we ſee, how we may know, what our Sentence ſhall be at the Day of Judgment: Two ſorts of Men may certainly know what their Sentence ſhall be, and a third ſort may know the great danger they are in, if they will but liſten to the Judgment of their own

own Conscience. Men, whose Consciences absolutely condemn them, may certainly expect, that God will condemn them; For when their guilt is so notorious, that they are forced to condemn themselves, why should they think, that a just and righteous Judge will not condemn them? Those whose Consciences do not condemn them, shall certainly be pardoned and rewarded by the Mercies of God: Those, whose Consciences will neither condemn nor absolve them, but do both by turns, are in a very doubtful and hazardous state; their Salvation as yet is very uncertain, and it concerns them *to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure.*

And should not this teach us to reverence the Judgment of Conscience as a Divine Sentence? Not to provoke our Consciences to condemn us; to obey their Admonitions, and to reform at their Rebukes and Censures? What would Sinners think, should they hear themselves condemned by God, every time they commit a known and wilful sin? And yet Conscience is the Tribunal of God, judges for God, and condemns us in God's Name, and by his Authority, and God will confirm and execute its Sentence, and therefore Conscience is a very venerable Judge.

And

And ought we not diligently to hearken to that Judgment, which Conſcience paſſes on us? This I am ſure is of vaſt concernment both to bad and to good Men, whether it condemn or abſolve. Bad Men indeed are very much afraid of their own Conſciences, becauſe they reprove and condemn them, and threaten them with Hell-fire, and therefore they fly from their Conſciences, will not hear them, and will not ſuffer them to ſpeak: But what do they get by this, but to drop ſecurely and quietly into Hell, and then Conſcience will ſpeak, and never be ſilent more: If they will not hear their Conſciences now, they muſt hear their Judge at the laſt Day. Though Conſcience be never ſo ſevere in its reproofs and cenſures, they are the reproofs of a Friend; the Judgment of Conſcience is only to warn us of the Judgment of God, to warn us to fly from the Wrath to come; and would Men hearken to their own Conſciences, it would give check to them, and reform their Lives; if we would patiently hear Conſcience threaten us with Hell-fire, it would be moſt the effectual means to prevent our falling into it.

But what is the Joy and Triumph of a good Conſcience, which ſpeaks Peace to us, and gives us a ſecure hope in God; which gives us the joyful proſpect of Eternal Rewards, of a Crown, and a Kingdom of thoſe Rivers of Pleaſures which are at God's Right-Hand!

Hand! When with St. *Paul* we can say; *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous judge will give me at that day*, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

This is a happy state indeed, a plerophory and full assurance of Hope, which makes good Men impatiently long for the Day of Judgment to be put into the possession of so great a happiness; and there is no way to have this, but from the Testimony of our own Consciences: The Holy Spirit indeed does give Testimony to good Men, and fill them *with joys unspeakable, and full of glory*: But then *the spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God*, 8. Rom. 16. Unless our Consciences give Testimony to us, the Holy Spirit never does; all pretences to the Testimony of the Spirit without this, are Cheats and Delusions: and Conscience will never give this Testimony to us, without a tryed and experienced Vertue, till the Flesh be subdued to the Spirit; till our Minds are refined and purified, and our Conversations adorn'd with all Divine and Heavenly Graces. Every new Conquest we gain over this World, every new degree of Strength and Vigour in serving God, our Increase in Charity, and all good Works, will add new degrees to our Hope; our Consciences will give the more ample Testimony to us; and that gives us greater

greater confidence towards God, which will make us joyfully expect that bleſſed *hope, and glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

The END.

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